



# Church of St. John the Baptist

Church of South India - Diocese of Medak

*Monsoon*

**Edition - July 2021**

PARISH MESSENGER

## Table of Contents

### Contents

Editorial Team.....	3
Editorial Note – <i>Satri Chandrika Samuel</i> .....	4
Get Connected – <i>Rev K James Cecil Victor</i> .....	5
Faith as Small as a Mustard Seed - <i>Mr M Udaia Kumar</i> .....	7
A Congregations’ Involvement in the Mission of the Church - <i>Bishop P Surya Prakash</i> .....	9
Felicitation - <i>Ms E Sumalatha</i> .....	11
Are you Positive? - <i>Dr M Anthony David Swaroop Kumar</i> .....	12
Crossword Puzzle – <i>Amos Philip</i> .....	14
An Ode to the Physicians – <i>Dr Priya John</i> .....	15
Refuge from the Deluge (Don't Miss the Boat) - <i>¬Mrs Yashodara Desappa</i> .....	16
Empty Tomb - A Borrowed Tomb - <i>Mrs Prameela Sadanand</i> .....	18
Being Empowered by the Holy Spirit - <i>Captain IN AJ Manohar</i> .....	20
Ride On - <i>Dr Maneesha Esther Mohanty</i> .....	22
COVID 19 - The Whole World in Agony Cries – <i>Dr Usha Adama</i> .....	23
New Normal to Normal – <i>Dr P Divyana Samuel</i> .....	24
God’s Ways – <i>Mrs Irene Joshua</i> .....	26
Let the Living Waters Flow – <i>Mr P Samuel Albert</i> .....	27
Heat Wave – <i>Mrs Nargis Abraham</i> .....	29
A Life Dedicated to Service - A Tribute to Dr Robins Theodore – <i>Mrs Mary Radha</i> .....	30
Corona Woes – <i>Mrs Sheila J Kurian</i> .....	32
A Quick Quiz – <i>Mrs Anna George</i> .....	33
Report-Sunday School - <i>Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar</i> .....	34
Report-VBS 2021 - <i>Dr Maneesha Esther Mohanty</i> .....	35
Artwork by the VBS Children on the Theme FAITH – <i>Sunday School Children</i> .....	38
Report - Men’s Fellowship - <i>Mr P Francis Augustine</i> .....	44
Report -Women’s Fellowship – <i>Mrs Angelina Clement</i> .....	47
<b><u>Testimonies</u></b>	
God is my Refuge and Strength – <i>Mrs Aruna Ezekiel</i> .....	50
Doing the Impossible with God – <i>Ms Hasmitha John Madhavaram</i> .....	51
My Miracle for Life – <i>Mrs Prema Christian</i> .....	52
He is my Shield - <i>Mrs Margaret Matthew Eeda</i> .....	52
Sunday School Corner .....	53
Crossword Puzzle - <i>Ms Swetcha Prayoktha and Ms B Shourya Prashastha</i> .....	53
Bible Women – Word Search - <i>Ms Swetcha Prayoktha</i> .....	54
Art Work by Sunday School Children .....	55
The Cross, the World and ME - <i>Ms Carolyn Paul</i> .....	56
Records - Church of St John the Baptist.....	57
Chronography of Fr Stan Swamy .....	58



## Editorial Board



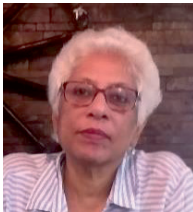
Rev K James Cecil Victor  
Chairman



Ms Satri Chandrika Samuel  
The Editor



Dr Maneesha Esther Mohanty  
Board Member



Ms Sheila Jacob Kurian  
Board Member



Mr Mesa James Samuel  
Board Member



Ms Sheeba Sam Roy  
Board Member



Mr Maju George Mathew  
Board Member



## Editorial Note

The very thought of monsoon engenders a great feeling of relief, relief from the scorching summer. To beat this, people usually travel to distant places, tourist destinations and hill stations, all over the country. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, even that has been drastically curtailed and we had to cool ourselves indoors this time. The second wave made it impossible for people to travel even to the nearest tourist places, as lockdowns were announced in most parts of our country.

It's time for us to ponder over the great deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ, during similar troubled periods in His lifetime, disturbed because almost all our plans have not come to fruition. We have had to alter our plans, our travel, our work timings, and our lifestyles themselves.

I commence my editorial note with the promise given to Joshua by Jehovah, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you are (go)" (Joshua 1:9).

Undoubtedly, I can assert that we are right now placed in a Catch-22 situation, with COVID-19 raging unabatedly and taking various shapes, colours, forms and variants. Hence, the promise to Joshua is very apt for us, too. The Lord is encouraging us to be strong and courageous. We need to lift our spirits up and not move an inch from our "leap of faith".

It is indeed disheartening that the second wave of COVID-19 was devastating, depleting and disorienting. Many of us have lost our loved ones, friends and acquaintances. People who appeared to be very strong, healthy and wealthy, have suddenly disappeared, creating a great void in families and sadness to all they were known to.

At times, I ponder whether this pandemic has been allowed by God Almighty, to be unleashed upon the human race, as it was during the times of Noah. The similarities are startling and ungodliness and being unholy, has reached the skies today. The uncertainty of life has become a huge reality and humankind is still battling to find answers to this. In spite of the production and release of innumerable vaccinations throughout the world, there are variants that are emerging which can beat these medicines and people still continue to be in great dilemma about their protection and safety. God has brought humanity down to its knees and made it to understand the Biblical pronouncement, "For what profits a man if gains the whole world, but loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

My sincere gratitude to the pastor, pastorate committee and the editorial team for their extended support in ensuring the release of this Parish Messenger. We have tried to add flavor to this edition by seeking testimonies and tributes from our members. I would like to thank all the members who submitted their articles, reports, puzzles and art work by our Sunday School children, especially the VBS coverage for the year 2021.

In closing, I wish to leave one more promise of our living Lord Jesus, "And, He did rescue us from mortal danger, and He will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and He will continue to rescue us" (2 Corinthians 1:10).

*Mrs Satri Chandrika Samuel*





## Get Connected

**Rev K James Cecil Victor**

*Dear Parishioners,*

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is today, was the same yesterday, and will be for evermore. It's good to see the strides in the *Parish Messenger* with its new outlook and space to incorporate many different features. The 'Monsoon Edition' is a fresh initiative by the Pastorate Committee to connect us more closely with the reflections and the activities of the Church. The editorial team's efforts are truly commendable. I appreciate all who have contributed articles and reports to edify one another.

During the Covid pandemic, we understand the importance of hygiene, appreciate the warmth of our families and above all, learn what it means to 'ask, seek and knock'. We were, and continue to be, desperate for God's intervention; especially for the recovery of those who contracted Covid and for the welfare of our near and dear ones. The two waves of the Covid pandemic in India have completely changed our lifestyles, our conversations, the way we work, communicate and learn and do business. The 'new normal' has become an intrinsic part of our day-to-day lives, though it has emotional, spiritual and financial implications. I'm pleased with our Church's active interventions —conducting a Webinar, an awareness programme by 'Times of India', providing medicine, groceries and financial assistance to the needy and other such initiatives. Let us continue to be the salt and light in this world so that our Heavenly Father may be glorified through our good works (Matthew 5: 16).

Our lives are all about connections and networks. We connect to communicate our feelings, emotions,

opinions, faith, culture, values, knowledge, experiences, and so on. We develop understanding, bonding, self-esteem, the ability to make decisions effectively and even solve problems. Hence, the Triune God, who is connected with the others in the Godhead, inspires and commands us to be connected with Him and with one another. John 15 is a classical narrative that expresses God's mind. He desires us to have life, bear fruit and be recognised as the disciples of Christ our Saviour, by being rooted in Christ. Evidently, we have no sustenance nor identity without being connected to Him!

God seeks an intimate relationship with His creation. He reveals Himself, His glory, power, majesty and love through His creation. Christ's Incarnation is the best example to understand God's desire to re-connect us with Himself and His creation. Jesus Christ came to earth to re-establish humankind's lost relationship with God and reinstate His glory. God enables and empowers human beings to realise the unique call to return to God and amend their ways (Jeremiah 18:11), to have the blessedness of being the children of God. In addition, they become committed stewards of God's creation. Some imageries, depicting our relationship with God in the Bible are the 'Clay and Potter' and the 'Sheep and the Shepherd'. These imageries call for total submission and attentiveness to the voice of God, to become useful vessels and to be in His fold. Though it is human nature to rebel against God and neighbour, God calls us to have a new heart that obeys His word. We are never too far from God, to return to Him. Let us make conscious efforts to be in communion with God and with the rest of the creation, where we will



find a new identity and new perspective for life.

We are not independent, but interdependent. Let us use and share God-given resources for the common good of all. While we seek to get connected with the known and even unknown in this media-saturated world, let us be connected as a family of God to nurture one another in faith, strengthen the weak, support the voiceless, 'do justice and walk humbly

with the Lord'.

May God bless all of us to synergise our God-given abilities so that we become more effective in our lives and witness.

God bless you all.

Your Parson



*The Rev K James Cecil Victor is Presbyter-in-Charge at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.  
He is also the Vice-President of All India Sunday School Association (AISSA).*



*Get Connected*





## Faith as Small as a Mustard Seed

Mathew 17:14-20

Dr M Udaia Kumar, Honorary Secretary

I am reminded of a chorus that my grandkids learnt at the St John's Church VBS "*Faith as small as a mustard seed, can move mountains*". It is a short chorus, a "go-to" for any occasion at our home, catchy and easy to learn. The lyrics are straight from the Bible, Matthew 17:14-20.

As I write this article, I know of families within our Church who have gone through a tough time during COVID-19. Some have had several family members ill, some continue to be admitted in hospitals, and some have even lost their dear ones. We often need a mountain moved, our mountains being illness, financial reversal, bereavement and several other such seemingly insurmountable problems.

Paul writes, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want, I can do all this through Him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:12-13). God did not deliver Paul from all his wants, but helped him triumph in all circumstances.



In another instance, in Luke 17:11-19, the ten lepers were healed just by their obedience to Jesus' instruction of going to the priest. They only needed enough faith to be willing to obey Jesus.

The mustard seed is described as "the smallest of all

seeds" in Matthew 13:32. It seems that anybody in the audience described in Matthew 17:14-20 would have at least that much faith, or else the father of the ill child would not have been there seeking Jesus' intervention and healing for his child. However, it is one thing to believe that God can, and another to have the faith that God will give us what we need.

What we learn from the above cited instances in the Bible is that prayer must be coupled with surrendering to God's will. There are times in the Bible when God did not give what the people sought. Surely, believers were praying for Stephen's safety, yet he was stoned to death. James (the Lord's brother) was beheaded, Paul was in prison. There were indeed believers praying for them. Jesus prays, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup be taken from me." (Matthew 26:39). Yet, Jesus was later crucified. Faith must be free of doubt and must come from a heart surrendered to God's will and plan. We are to live with the faith that God will fulfil His plan in our lives and His plan is the best for us.

"Whatever God allows us to endure in this life, it will not compare to the glory He has waiting in the life to come" (Romans 8:18). Further, we know that "In all things God works for the good of those who love Him" (Romans 8:28). During these trying COVID times, we may have to face tough circumstances. How blessed are we that we can be sure that God is constantly working for our good? We are called to endure even through all things — good or bad, through faith.

Our church has been blessed during the pandemic with the opportunity of being connected with one another, praying together and worshipping together

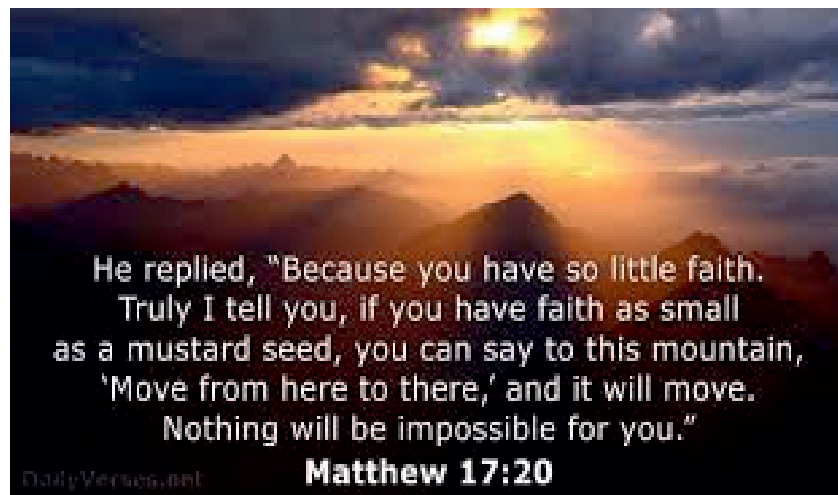


through the online church services. The Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, Youth Fellowship and Sunday School continued to enrich the spiritual needs of members of the church through online sessions. We established a Church COVID Support Group with the help of volunteers, to provide needed help such as provision of groceries, medicines, COVID essentials, hospital admission, doctor consultation and so on to COVID-affected families. Our church has had two vaccination drives by tying up with hospitals. COVID awareness camp through the *Times of India* and a webinar with reputed doctors were organised to build awareness and address doubts related to COVID. We are thankful and grateful to God for His providence and blessings through all these initiatives.

With gratitude in our hearts, let us continue to seek God's help in building faith. Like the father of the ill child in Mark 9:24, let us ask God's help in overcoming instances of unbelief. Let us live with the assurance of Mathew 19:26 that 'through God all things are possible'. And, at the same time, let us learn from Paul in Philippians 4:12-13 to be content in every situation, drawing strength from God, and surrendering to His will, with the assurance that He will help us triumph in all circumstances. Amen.



*Dr M Udaia Kumar is the Honorary Secretary at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*







## A Congregations' Involvement in the Mission of the Church

**Bishop P Surya Prakash**

Mission, is the mission of God carried out by His church. It is traditionally referred to as, *Missio Dei* in Latin, translated as the 'Mission of God'. It is God's mission in the world, primarily through His church. The church lives by its participation in the mission of God. Otherwise, it is only a self-serving human social organisation. The Church is supposed to be a dynamic movement for the mission.

How can the Church become a movement and channel of God's mission in the world? There is need, therefore, for the congregations' involvement in the mission of the Church, both inside and outside. There are four areas which need attention and active participation of the members of the Church. Proper organisation of these areas will result in revitalising, renewing and transforming congregational life in worship, sharing of resources and growing in witness. These four areas have been described in some detail below.

**1. Worship and Music:** This committee is responsible for meaningful, creative and helpful worship services of the Church. The committee will be accountable for changes in the worship services, deciding on and securing guest preachers for any special occasions or when the Pastor is not available, presenting special programmes of music and drama, or the organising of special meetings which affect the spiritual life of the congregation. People with musical talents and interest in worship could be appointed to this committee. Our Church has been too long without the real joy of worshipping in truth and spirit. All over the world, the charismatic movement is spreading and new charismatic groups are being formed. House fellowships are being built. These are meant not only for geographical convenience, but also for theological reasons. They are a kind of reaction to the neglect of its members in several large historic Churches. Our liturgical experiences should be related to everyday life situations.

I often get the impression that the leaders of worship programmes go through certain formalities, such as reading the liturgical order, carrying out routine activities, Sunday after Sunday, making lengthy announcements or written intercessions, taking part in the Holy Communion in a disorderly manner, rendering special individual songs, more for self-projection and ego fulfilment than in real praise of God—unmindful of visitors or even of the persons sitting next to them. Unprepared reading of the lessons from the Bible, ill-prepared sermons and so on, do not add to the spirituality of worship. After attending the worship, the congregation needs to return with the full satisfaction that they worshipped God, heard the Gospel of the good news of Jesus Christ and that they truly enjoyed the fellowship of the community of the faithful.

Much depends on the leader who prepares for the worship, prayerfully and reverently, keeping in mind the genuine love of his/her people. Three or four years of full time, residential theological training is not required if the person only reads the written liturgy and does nothing creatively. All the worship leaders need to make a note of this and make the worship an eventful experience of celebrating the great work done by Jesus Christ in saving the world.

The chapter on Worship of the Church in the Constitution of the Church of South India gives enough provision for creativity and dynamism, while preparing and leading worship. The revised *Book of Common Worship* also provides ample variations/alternatives for use, according to the occasion. The Scriptures say, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness".

**2. Mission and Evangelism:** This is an important committee, responsible for all mission and evangelism activities of the Church. It has the responsibility for developing and promoting outreach programmes of the congregation. This committee is concerned with the service to the



neighbourhood, as well as support and interest to sustain the general mission of the church. The congregation looks to this committee for help in dealing with social issues and in keeping everyone informed about various welfare needs. The mission committee should work on action projects and find ways of funding the mission's support. Earlier, during the great Missionary days, the Gospel was seen as against cultures and religions. But now the understanding of this Mission has changed. It is no longer Christianity against other religions, but the Church in our schools and colleges to show what we believe in. St Paul says, "We are the living letters" (2 Corinthians 3:1-3).

Years ago, the late Bishop Peddi Victor Prem Sagar introduced in the Church of South India, a new concept of Mission and called it VELCOM (Vision for Equipping Local Congregations for Mission). Adequate literature is available on this vision.

The essence of this vision is as follows: The congregation meets periodically for an agape fellowship. After the fellowship, they discuss and set an agenda for the issues that they could attend to in the mission of the church. Then, they analyse and set priorities of what they can do, in a given time with the available resources. Finally, they make an action plan for implementation.

VELCOM — agape leading to agenda, agenda leading to analysis, analysis leading to action. What a wonderful vision for equipping local congregations for mission! "Woe, unto me, if I do not preach the Gospel. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation". (1 Corinthians 9:16) These are the two most famous and popular statements of St Paul on the mission of sharing the Gospel.

**3. Christian Education:** The committee on Christian education has the responsibility of establishing, supervising and evaluating the Christian educational activities of the Church. Providing relevant learning experiences for all Church members and staffing the Christian education programme, is its most important task. All facets of the educational programme must be covered for all ages. This committee is responsible

for establishing the curriculum, teaching aids, materials, and supplies, as well as teaching equipment and devices. Teachers for the programme, volunteers, helpers, and resource people must be secured. Information and practical experience in instructional techniques and information about the faith and various curricular activities/areas must be provided. Christian nurture, is as important as education in the schools. It is no wonder that King Solomon always insisted on his teaching his sons (and daughters too, though this is not specifically mentioned in the Book of Proverbs) that fear, in this case, reverence of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom. In many instances, present-day Christian children are provided with quality education, but not qualitative Christian nurture. Proper Christian education materials need to be used in the Sunday schools, or in other times like Vacation Bible schools. Good quality materials are produced by the Evangelical Fellowship of India (CEEFI), India Sunday School Union (ISSU) Coonoor and other such agencies. Some churches, like Church of South India, Church of North India and Mizo Presbyterian Church produce their own Christian education materials. Teachers, need to be trained for teaching Christian education in the Sunday schools. Teaching and leadership of the Sunday schools should not become a monopoly of some people, but of the whole church. Teach the children when they are young, so that they do not depart from it when they are adults.

**4. Facilities and Finances:** A committee for facilities and finances is responsible for, Mission within as follows:

- a. Overseeing the Church budget
- b. Setting the pledge programme and fund-raising events
- c. Disbursing funds to meet financial obligations of the Church
- d. Maintaining programmes for audit and payroll or assessment allocations
- e. Inspecting and insuring the Church-owned property
- f. Detailing and supervising custodial work
- g. Maintaining and beautifying Church buildings and their surroundings



Finally, we need to discuss **Mission outside of the church**, usually call extension work. This is the work of evangelism and mission in sharing the Gospel of the good news of Jesus Christ, in caring and having concern for people in need, for sustaining the ecology and environment and many other examples of diaconal ministry. A congregation that is motivated for mission will set apart a certain percentage of its budget for this cause. Often, the responsibility for such activities is entrusted to the treasurer alone. He or she, will need the assistance of a group of people for advice and direction.

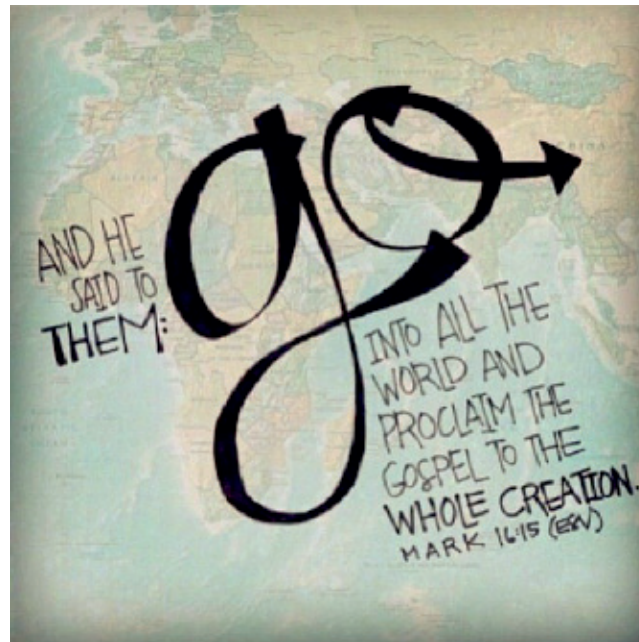
individual affair, but of the community of believers. It is not an exclusive, but an inclusive enterprise. The church exists for Mission. Our congregations, or the Pastorate Committee need to discuss these matters in their meetings and make the Mission of God a reality for their church. This is possible only if there is a will to do it. Often, it is the Pastorate Committee that takes all decisions regarding the congregation. And, rightly so! However, decentralising the activities and decision making, will only help the church grow. What we need today, is not a muted congregation, but an active community.

In conclusion, *Mission* is God's Mission. It is entrusted to the people of God. It is not simply an

“To whom much is given, much is also expected of them” (Luke 12: 48).

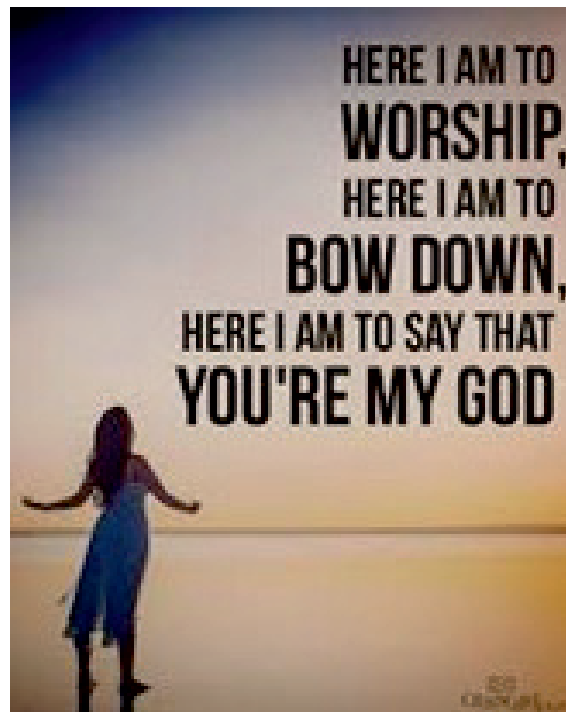


*The Rt Rev Dr Surya Prakash is Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Karimnagar, CSI*



## Welcoming - Ms E Sumalatha

*Presbyter-in-charge and the office bearers welcome Ms E Sumalatha, the ordained, who is posted at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad for ministerial formation.*





## Are you Positive?

**Dr M Anthony David Swaroop Kumar**

On pins and needles, Rachel called her husband, “Are you positive?” These days, positive and negative mean the result of the RT PCR. Even common men, women, and children have heard about RT PCR and COVID-19. As soon as she heard that he was negative, Rachel heaved a great sigh of relief and wanted to pray and thank the Lord.

The world as we know it has metamorphosed from the beginning of 2020. The announcement of a lockdown in March 2020 in our country has heralded, what we call, a 'new-normal'.

Things are not as they were. A tiny 1-micron bit of RNA twisted in a protein (that is, a virus) has blown the world apart! This tiny Corona virus has made us sit up and be conscious of it. New words have come into use. New protocols and new ways of doing things are in place.

COVID-19, which is the Coronavirus disease birthed in 2019, is more than just a viral disease. It has affected economies: the world economies, provincial and city economies. The economies of homes have also suffered greatly. So, this is an economic scourge, too. How is this disease affecting us?

This virus has affected and continues to affect many in our immediate family, larger circle, and acquaintances. Strangely, some people escape with no symptoms. Some have mild symptoms like fever, body aches, and loss of sensation of smell. And, others have respiratory, as well as other complications.

Simple medicines and home or self-quarantine seem to be enough for many, but some patients need to go

to quarantine centres. A few even need hospitalisation. Some of these hospitalised, become serious and need admission into the Intensive Care Units (ICUs). Some patients need oxygen. Some are given oxygen through nasal tubes, while others need intubation. Some severe cases even need to be on ventilators. A few patients are not able to make it and they pass away. Most unfortunately, the lack of free availability of oxygen plagues some of them.

By God's grace, many are healed and are coming gratefully back to the mainstream. However, some of these again have serious post - COVID complications.

In light of this pandemic, pandemonium constantly plagues us.

As Christians, as believers in an omnipotent God, what is our response? We are all bewildered, flummoxed. Why is God, who is in control, who is a loving God, allowing this scourge to invade humankind? Is it His judgment?

Questions such as these worry us. Are there any answers? Some say God wants to teach us a lesson, and so allows us to suffer. Perhaps. What exactly is He teaching us?

Importantly, what do we do about this problem?

*Pray.* Yes, many of us are praying for all those affected. The result? Some people are healed, and our faith gets bolstered.

Then, some people do not get healed; they succumb to the disease, and our faith gets a shock.

*Help. Please do help—* May be financially, or send a



home-cooked meal to the affected family. Or, help out the affected person or family with information and practical assistance regarding hospital admissions or even procurement of oxygen.

There are two approaches we take vis-a-vis this crisis.

The first one, is to develop a fear of COVID-19. This becomes a phobia, a psychological dread. People in this category take extreme precautions and are always applying sanitisers to their hands and cell phones, they avoid people and dread to hear anything about it. They drink up all the fake news and views expressed in the “WhatsApp University”. They faithfully take the vaccines and fervently follow all the protocols, with the hope that the virus will give them a wide berth and skirt all of them and their families.

In fact, in some of these people, the fear of the disease, the phobia, is making them suffer more than the virus itself. They actually need to go for counselling and psychotherapy!

On the other hand, there are those who are super spiritual, if I may be allowed to use this phrase. They say, “The Lord will protect and heal us. Why should we worry?” They also say, “Why take the vaccine? Let us trust the Lord, brothers! Why take so many precautions? Isn't God in control?”

“We must pray and ask God to protect us. He has promised to listen to our prayers and He will keep his promises. Isn't He the same yesterday, today, and forever?”

Which is the right approach? Which approach is the Bible is telling us to take?

We need to maintain a golden mean between the above two approaches. They are both extremes. We need to strike a balance, a dynamic homeostasis as it were, between the two views. This is possible if we consider that all medical knowledge is a gift of God. It is God who heals.

It is the same God who enables scientists to devise a vaccine in record time. It is the same God who is behind the brain of the physician and the loving care of the nurse or therapist.

What do we do then you ask?

Pray and ask the good Lord to protect you, your family, your family of families, your society, and the world. Be diligent in this duty of yours to pray. At the same time, take the necessary precautions and protect yourself and your family. Be mindful of the protection of others, too. Really, care for everyone. If you are eligible, take the vaccine when available, but do continue to take precautions. And, the Lord our God will protect you and provide for you!

If her husband had said “I am positive,” how would Rachel respond? And, if you were in her place, how would you respond?



*Dr M Anthony David is a creative communicator for Christ.  
He teaches at a medical college and volunteers with ministries such as PTP, YFC and EMFI.*





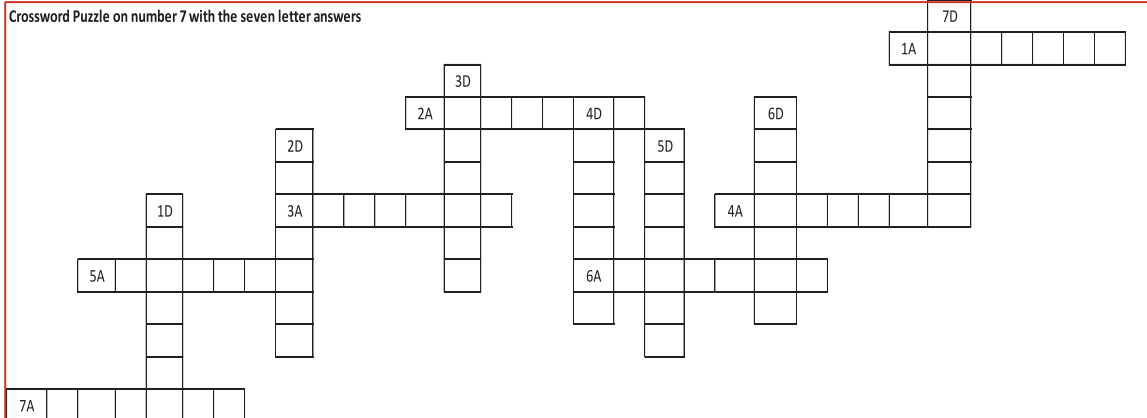
**Hurry!**

🌿 Here's your chance to win a prize. 🌿

**Complete the Crossword puzzle below and rush your answers to us. \* Prizes will be awarded to the first three correct entries!**

**Amos Philip (Inters)**

All answers for the Crossword puzzle will have **seven** letters and are associated with the number **SEVEN**.



S.No	CLUES ACROSS
1A	Jesus replied to Peter as to how many times we have to forgive each other. ----- times seven: Matthew 18:21 and 22 —not 490 times but complete forgiveness)
2A	Naaman dipped seven times in the Jordan river to cure this disease: 2 Kings 5:1-14-----
3A	When he opened the seventh seal, there was ----- in heaven for about half an hour: Revelation 8:1
4A	Whose dreams Joseph interpreted regarding seven years of plenty and seven years of famine ----- Genesis? 41:25-27
5A	Nebuchadnezzar ordered the ----- heated seven times hotter than usual - Daniel 3:19
6A	The seventh angel sounded his ----- and there were loud voices in heaven - Revelation 11:15
7A	Last of the seven words of Jesus on the Cross: Father, into thy hands I ----- my spirit - Luke 23:46
S.No	CLUES DOWN
1D	First of the seven words of Jesus on the Cross:----- for they do not know what they are doing - Luke 23:34
2D	And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large ---- ----- full: Matthew 15:37
3D	Joshua and his army marched around this city for seven days - Joshua chapter 6
4D	The seventh day was to be set apart and observe this day by keeping it holy - Deuteronomy 5:12
5D	The seven angels who had the seven ----- came out of the temple - Revelation 15:6
6D	Who fought with red dragon which had seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads - Revelation 12:7
7D	Who weaved the seven braids of Samson's hair into the fabric on the loom and tightened it with a pin - Judges 16:13-14

\* Answers to be sent to [parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org](mailto:parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org)

\*Correct answers will be published in the next issue of the Parish Messenger



## An Ode to the Physicians



### Dr Priya John

I can feel the warmth but cannot cuddle him  
I can feel the love, but cannot hug him  
I can feel the zeal, but cannot sense with him  
I can feel the hunger but cannot dine with him



I can feel the child in him but cannot play  
I can feel the charm but cannot take delight  
I can feel his joy but cannot jump with him  
I can feel strength but cannot imbibe him

I can feel smile but cannot laugh with him  
I can see the tiny desires in his eyes but cannot fulfil  
I can hum the lullaby but cannot sing it for u  
Lonely nights and days filled with vacuum without you

All these to fight the deadly pandemic amidst us  
Along with the many physicians around  
Who sacrificed their precious lives  
And to abide with the Hippocratic Oath

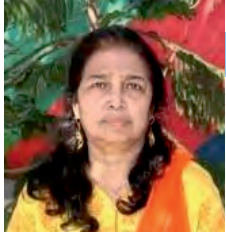
To see people, get back united with families  
To see that virus is shunned off into the darkness  
To await those bright sunny days again  
To foresee the rainbow in the sky with u  
To giggle and shout with joy like u do!!!



*Dr Priya John is a consultant Nephrologist in AIG hospitals. She had keen interest in writing reviews apart from reading books, mainly that of science fiction.*







## Refuge from the Deluge (Don't Miss the Boat)

**Mrs Yashodara Desappa**

*Five friends — Dilly, Dally, Not Sure, Later and Decision are discussing things happening today, like in Noah's times.*

The scene changes back to 6000 years.

**People:** What are you doing Noah?

**Noah:** I am building an ark. God said it would rain for 40 days and 40 nights continually.

**People:** (*mocking*) are you mad? We have not seen rain. What colour is it? Is it black or is it white? Please tell us.

**Dally:** When you obey God, people will laugh at you, but you will have the last laugh.

**Later:** Thankfully God gave the blueprint. If humans plan, we come up with the Titanic.

**Not Sure:** You may think, the greatest danger are the waves outside, but the woodpeckers inside the Ark, pecking away with their negative thoughts are more dangerous.

**Dally:** (*scratching*) Wish Noah had squished these pesky mosquitoes then!

*Noah and his family enter the Ark and God closes the door.*

Noah means '**rest**'. The Ark is a symbol of Christ. Jesus says, "Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. The ark was covered with pitch inside and outside. Cover in Hebrew means our atonement. This is a picture of Christ who atoned for our sins. There was only one door to enter the Ark and we can enter only through Christ. Jesus says, "I am the door. I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by me".

**Not Sure:** Isn't doing good and going to church the way to salvation?

**Decision:** Sorry. Salvation is a gift of God's Grace. We cannot earn it. The Ark was provided, just like how Christ was sent, as a gracious provision for our salvation. Remember the door will not always be open. Even as the rapture is approaching, the door to heaven will be closed forever, in the twinkling of an eye.

Good parenting like Noah's obedience makes for generational blessings. Acts 16:31 says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your children".

*The Ark begins to float. All in the Ark say Baruch ha Shem, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."*

**Dilly and Dally:** (*running*) "**Save us.** Open the door. Let us in. We should have listened to Noah."

*Too late. Jesus has shut the door.*



**Later:** Don't be left behind. Noah preached for 100 years and no one listened. Today, Jesus says in Revelation 3:20. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in".

**Decision:** Implicit obedience to God's plans, however difficult, yields rich dividends. Noah and his family stood out in a crowd. No matter what the storm, there is always God's Rainbow waiting.

Today we invite every Dilly, Dally, Later, Not Sure and Decision, to get into the Ark right now.

**Decision:** All you have to say is Yes Lord! I repent of my sins and thank you for dying on the Cross and rising again from the dead, for my sake. You are now born again. So simple.

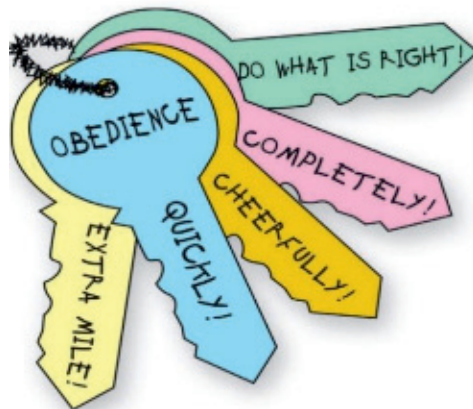
**Dilly, Dally,** Say yes to Jesus, Say yes to Eternity.

**Not Sure,**

**Later, Decision:** (*pointing to the Cross.*) We are in the boat. Don't miss the boat. Will you?



*Mrs Yashodhra Desappa, Ambassador for Christ, Businesswoman and  
Pastorate Committee member at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*





## Empty Tomb - A Borrowed Tomb

**Mrs Prameela Sadanand**

Jesus went to Peter's home and healed his mother-in-law who was ill. Afterwards, He went to preach to the crowds who were following Him. There, a would-be follower of Jesus expressed his wish to go with Him wherever He went. Then Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his Head" (Matthew 8:20). If we try to understand the above verse, it will open many incidents of "borrowing" in the life of Jesus.

1. **Borrowed Womb:** God, the father, used Mary's womb to give birth to His son, Jesus. Mary, a virgin, betrothed to Joseph, found great favour in the eyes of the Father. The angel, Gabriel, who was sent by God said to Mary, "Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" ... and behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:28 and 31).
2. **Borrowed Manger:** Jesus was born in a borrowed manger in Bethlehem. As per the order of Caesar Augustus, for census, Joseph took Mary who was pregnant to Bethlehem in Judea from Nazareth to get themselves registered. "So, it was that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And, she brought forth her first born Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:6-7).
3. **Borrowed Boat:** Jesus called rugged fishermen as His disciples and used a borrowed boat to preach to the multitudes (Luke 5:3).
4. **Borrowed Colt:** When His time for crucifixion was nearing, to enter Jerusalem, He borrowed a colt (Luke 19:30).
5. **Borrowed an upper room to celebrate Passover:** Before His death, Jesus, wanted to institute the Lord's Supper. So, He called His disciples, Peter and John and asked them to prepare the Passover (Luke 22:10-12).
6. **Borrowed a garden to pray:** After the Lord's Supper, Jesus came out and went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray and told His disciples also to pray, so that they may not fall into temptation (Luke 22:44).
7. **Borrowed a robe by the mockers:** The Roman soldiers made great fun of Jesus by gathering around Him. They borrowed a scarlet robe and put it on Him (Matthew 27:28).
8. **Borrowed a shoulder to carry His Cross:** Jesus started His journey, carrying His cross to Golgotha, the place where He was to be crucified. The mocking soldiers, the mob, the disciples of Jesus, Mother



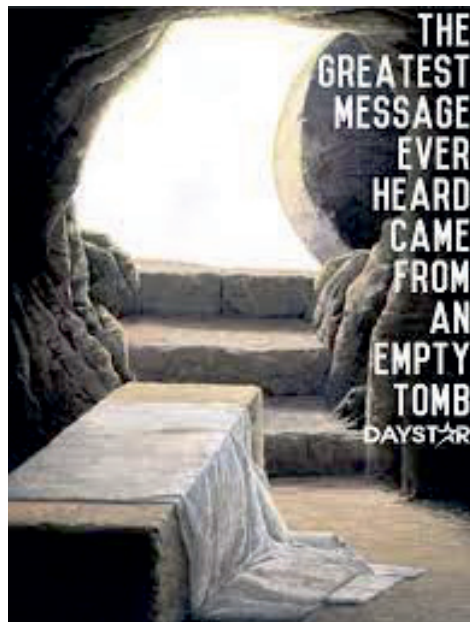
Mary, all His family and His followers all started walking with Jesus. Jesus was cruelly treated by the soldiers, blood started oozing from His wounds. He was tired and dehydrated and crushed under the weight of the cross. At that juncture, the soldiers borrowed another man named Simon to carry His cross for some time (Luke 23:26).

9. **Borrowed a Tomb:** Jesus was buried in the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:58-59).
10. **Borrowed a lie to deny His Resurrection:** When the chief priest and others came to know that Jesus was raised from the dead, they were afraid and bribed the guards at the tomb to lie that their disciples took Him away when they were asleep (Matthew 28:13).

Being the Son of Almighty God, heir of the whole world, Jesus humbled Himself to borrow the things He needed and right up to His death on the cross. While doing so, he made the Cross the everlasting symbol of redemption, which previously was a symbol of shame. His death on the cross gave the ultimate definition of humility to the world. Praise the Lord!



*Mrs Prameela Sadanand is a Retired Senior Accounts Manager, Finance and Accounts Department, from Electronic Corporation of India Ltd, Hyderabad.*





## Being Empowered by the Holy Spirit

**Captain IN AJ Manohar**

In life, our biggest challenge is facing the problems that we inevitably confront. We sometimes feel woefully inadequate to cope with certain situations and may end up with a zombie-like feeling of sheer helplessness.

What makes us feel powerless and feeble despite the presence of an omnipotent God? Are we not in the same boat as Moses when he told God, "I am slow of speech and prone to weak use of your power."? (Exodus 4:10) It all zeroes down to just one missing element and that is the lack of the presence of the all-empowering Holy Spirit, freely given to each one of us as a gift.

The revelation leading to the understanding of the Holy Spirit is evident from the study of the life of King David. The Lord offered the Israelites protection with the Ark of the Covenant, which is today manifested through the Holy Spirit. King David waited several years to be crowned king and the Ark of the Covenant, considered God's dwelling place, remained out of reach to him. This was because, in his zeal to acquire the ark, King David did not strictly follow God's instructions about the handling of the ark, while it was being brought back to Jerusalem from Beth-Shemesh (1 Samuel 7:1). Uzzah put his hand out to steady the ark which resulted in his death (Numbers 4:15) because, while God's presence within the Ark of the Covenant provided blessings and victory to the Israelites over their enemies, it also demanded reverential handling.

In today's context, reverence simply means that we need to seek God's power by worshipfully inviting and enabling the Holy Spirit to help us face life's challenges. This includes a great responsibility and willingness to keep away from sin. Our voluntary action to lead holy lives enables the Holy Spirit's power to be manifested in our lives.

In today's world, our lack of reverence to God can be shown in subtle ways— like being late or irregular to church, neglecting God's word, or not praying, lack of fellowship, inadequate giving, and so on. These are a few among the myriad follies we all are aware of. The sinking feeling we experience when we transgress, clearly indicates some lack of reverence and devotion to God.

Even as the Ark of the Covenant showered blessings on Israel, so also the Holy Spirit can be a great blessing in our lives. In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." True to His word, the Holy Spirit's power descended on the church in Jerusalem and 3000 believers were added to the church on the day of Pentecost.



Simply stated, the lack of the Holy Spirit in our lives makes us ignoramuses who cannot perceive Godly things. What a sorry state we will be in if we go through life independent of the Spirit of God! On the other hand, with God in our lives there is promise of a reward, for it is written in 1 Corinthians 2:9

*What no eye has seen,  
What no ear has heard  
What no mind has conceived  
God has planned for those who love Him.*

What a great blessing therefore it is, to be in the centre of God's will and reap a whirlwind of rewards as our destiny. As CS Lewis says, "Everything that is not eternal, is worthless in eternity".

Therefore, let us focus all our energies towards gaining a rich inheritance in eternity and being blessed. Amen.



*Captain IN AJ Manohar, whilst posted at Mumbai, served the Church at St Thomas Cathedral as the Secretary and was on the executive committee of the Bombay Diocesan Council. He is a member of Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*





## Ride On

**Dr Maneesha Esther Mohanty**

A famous quote by Albert Einstein is “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving”. Before you read on, I would like you to take a moment, close your eyes and imagine that you are riding a bicycle. Imagine your surroundings. Imagine how you feel.

Some of you with a vivid imagination could perhaps feel a gush of fresh air on your skin or could see your curls ruffling in all directions. Did you stop to see some things around you, or did you drive around the block at lightning speed? Perhaps you felt the heat and sweat dripping down your brow, and your muscles tensing up due to the pedalling. Perhaps you imagined yourself on a bustling lane or on a winding road on the hill side. For some it could be a past memory flashing through your mind or images that maybe elusive or unpleasant. Einstein used a bicycle ride as a beautiful metaphor for life. Life can be enjoyable, it can be a struggle, it can be lonely at times and lively at other times, life can be lovable, and it can be scary. Wisdom lies in the second part of the quote, to keep your balance you must keep moving. We all go through phases of ups and downs and needless to say we keep moving on. The Bible tells us that “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). In the weakest times we have the power of the Holy Spirit, which helps us to grow in love and to spread love. God has given us the spirit of a sound mind.

According to Stephen Covey, a famous author and motivational speaker, it is important to be able to differentiate between things that we can influence or control and things that concern us, but we cannot control or influence everyone, or all circumstances. We need to be proactive in doing things that we can control or influence and not be reactive to things that we cannot. It is impossible for me to change the way people behave or talk, but I can control my actions and attitude. Can I change the weather outside if it is too hot or if it is raining? No, I cannot but I can still be in a good mood. Can I stop global warming all by myself? Certainly not but I can reduce, reuse, recycle. Can I change the way people drive on the road? No, but I can try to be safe, wear a helmet, put a seat belt, drive in the speed limit. I cannot control the dress my children want to wear, but I can certainly set an example for my children. Can I control the results of the elections? No, but I can vote. I cannot change the news unfolding around us. But I can change the things I watch or read. Can I clear the traffic jam? No, but why not listen to some beautiful music while you wait? If we follow these practices, we can certainly work towards having a sound mind.

It is indeed a privilege to have faith and believe that even the things that I cannot control, or influence are in God's control and that God gives us the spirit of sound mind.

References: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey and <https://www.coachcarson.com/circle-of-concern-circle-of-influence/>



*Dr Maneesha is an active member of Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*





## COVID 19 - The Whole World in Agony Cries

Dr Usha Adams

### COVID -19

The whole world in agony cries CORONA, CORONA,  
As the virus speeds through cold and hot climes and saunas.  
The think banks around the globe try to stop it in its tracks,  
But, for a short while there is no turning back.

Its semblance to a crown gives it,  
Its name  
And for the woes in the world, it is to blame.  
Emerged in China, whether accidental or intentional.  
Probing, as to its origin goes international.  
The spicules around it are like deadly fangs  
Finding its way into human-bodies with a bang.  
It crosses borders attacking young and old,  
But, over the robust and healthy it has no hold.  
Researchers around are racing in time, to find the right drug,  
But COVID-19 still seems to be a SUPER, SUPER KILLER BUG.  
Masks, gloves, hand washing and distancing are the order of the day  
To keep the infection of the virus at bay.



Our gratitude to the doctors, nurses and paramedics at the frontline for their dedication, hard work and sacrifices sublime.

HOW LONG, HOW LONG will this pandemic go on  
We are tired of the morbid news, when we switch on the TV.  
Lord we pray for your divine intervention of healing and blessings on all of your creation.  
Let the pain, anguish and distress come to a stop  
So that we could to a normal routine hop.



*Dr Usha Adams is a retired paediatrician. Her husband, Dr Dawson Adams retired as an orthopaedic surgeon and was an ardent member of the church. He passed away 2 years ago.*







## New Normal to Normal

**Dr P Divyana Samuel**

Where do I start?

COVID-19 struck us unawares, as we were living our regular hectic lives and abruptly brought us down to our knees, locking us up in our homes and to be specific, to our respective rooms at home, making us wonder where this world is heading to.

The second wave, which hit our country in the early March 21, has been devastating to so many of our loved ones who have lost either their father, or mother or a sister or a brother or a relative. Even I lost two of my uncles and one aunt who had visited our home for our housewarming ceremony —for the last time and now two of my cousins have become orphans.

The medical fraternity, too, was not spared, as so many senior doctors, paramedics and support staff who were the very back bone of service to the COVID affected, succumbed and left this earthly abode, sending shock waves to the entire medical world. The top echelons in the medical field were groping for answers for this intriguing scenario which came as a “Bolt from the Blue”.

With uninterrupted news of COVID-19 flashing 24×7 on our television sets, mobile phones and various gadgets, our lives have become stagnant, rudderless and at times meaningless, since we are already preparing mentally and physically, preparing our minds and bodies to accept the new normal life, forced upon us by the dreaded COVID-19. We are not able to step out of our homes to visit shopping malls, restaurants, ice-cream parlours, or for that matter to even meet our close friends with whom we used to spend leisure time at just a drop of our hats.

People have been forced to become net savvy, browsing throughout the day, either on the system, or through our mobile phone to keep in touch with our well-wishers or learning something of interest, or to watch a movie of our liking. Life has become miserable, and we are getting almost choked at our homes for hours together, even though we make lots of effort to keep ourselves busy, with errands, exerting ourselves physically, doing exercises, reading books and sleeping.

For me personally, life at the hospital was a mixed bag, as sometimes I felt I am doing something good and fulfilling the very purpose of my life of serving the sick, but many times, it became a big challenge to wake up in the morning (after having very disturbed naps, at times even with bad dreams about attending to COVID positive patients), get ready and to go to hospital. Even my parents ask why I continue to work?

The only force that propels me to move my body out of my bed and to proceed to the hospital was the work of the Holy Spirit, who keeps on pushing and nudging me to continue with my work despite all kinds of dangers around me. I always remember Psalm 91, where in the Psalmist asserts “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty”.



Only with this promise and covenant of the Lord, I am moving forward with great hope and vision that all things will convert from new normal to normal very soon.

I thank my Lord for the gift of life and gift of breath and good health. He is our Jehovah-Rapha and will do justice to all his children very soon. God Bless.



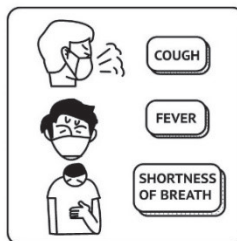
*Dr P Divyana Samuel is currently working in a medical institution and is preparing for her post-graduation.*



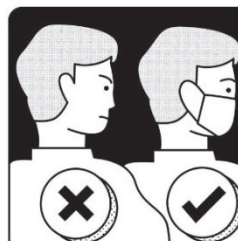
Maintain social distancing.



Disinfect your hands here.



Do you currently have the following symptoms?



No mask, no entry.



Contactless pickup point





## God's Ways

**Mrs Irene Joshua**

Sometimes God works in mysterious ways in our lives. Have you ever wondered why at times that God doesn't answer our prayers even when we pray desperately? We understand Jesus hears our prayers, knows our needs and answers them. Yet, at times we all face situations when the heavens seem to be closed and our prayers are unheard. This can give us a great deal of anxiety and we make all of our best efforts to help God answer our prayers.

I am not spared of this experience. As a freelance writer, my constant plea to God is for consistent work and prompt payments. While I have seen God's hand and provision with respect to my work over the years, I have also experienced dry seasons where I don't get work. During these times, the Lord has been teaching me a valuable lesson to look up to Him alone. When I have tried to apply for other writing work or even ask people with whom I work for projects, I have seen that the Lord has blocked my ways. Many times, I convince myself that I am being rational and practical by applying for work. However, Lord's ways are different. He has been showing me that I am more dependent on my self-will and self-efforts rather than leaning on Him completely. I have seen that He provides for me only when I look up to Him, trust Him completely and not depend on people for work.

He has revealed to me time and again that He is faithful in meeting our needs, in His own ways and time and not according to ours. Sometimes, I feel that this kind of reliance on the Lord requires a lot of faith, patience and trust on His word. We all know that the Lord never fails in any of His promises. He is faithful and stands up to meet His children's needs. We all have experienced His faithfulness and fulfillment of His promises. Yet, when the time comes where we must wait and do as per His expectations, we as human beings can feel overwhelmed.

I have felt intrigued by the Lord's ways and it is sometimes very tough to understand His plans for us. It is challenging to simply sit and expect God to meet my needs and I have been tempted many times to just go ahead and apply for jobs, only to experience a blocked road. Nevertheless, the Lord has His own reasons why He deals with His children in certain ways. Today, I was totally surprised when I read a devotion through which the Lord ministered to me. *"Therefore, I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards..."* (Hosea 2:14-15)

Mrs L B Cowman says the reason why the Lord leads us into the wilderness is to develop enduring qualities in us, which otherwise I guess cannot be produced. References: Cowman L.C. (1997). *Streams in the Desert*. Michigan: Zondervan



*Mrs Irene Joshua is a freelance writer, wife, mother, and non-conformist to anything contradicting social justice, fairness, equity, and Biblical values.  
Let the Living Waters Flow*





## Let the Living Waters Flow

**Mr P Samuel Albert**

At home, off late we have been regularly listening to a beautiful and heart-wrenching song “Let the Living Waters Flow”. This song has touched us extraordinarily, during these troubled times.

As we continue to listen to this song day-in and day-out, it synchronises our hearts and spontaneously takes our minds backwards around 4000 years ago, to the Israelites, who said they could not sing because they had been exiled from Babylon and their temples had been destroyed. Psalm 137 gives us a picture of their suffering and lamentation and their prayer to Jehovah, while they remembered Jerusalem.

Similarly, we reminisce about the wonder-working power of Almighty God Jesus, who has shielded my immediate family from the dreaded COVID-19 all these days, months and years. Many of our loved ones have faced the brunt of this menacing disease and, sadly, a few of them could not come out of it and have left for their heavenly abode.

Simultaneously, we are reminded of the promise of the Lord; “Those who drink the living water from the very hand of God will live eternally” (John 4:14). It has been my family's prayer that we gulp and drink the living waters from the palm of our living and resurrected God, until our last breath.

As I am so engrossed with the subject of living waters, I browsed the Bible and found a few verses, which mentions the living waters. These are:

“The one who believes in me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water!’” (John 7:38).

“The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.” (Proverbs 18:4)

“He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore, He will lift up His head.” (Psalm 110:7)

“Therefore, you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3)

“Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” (Revelations 22:1-2)



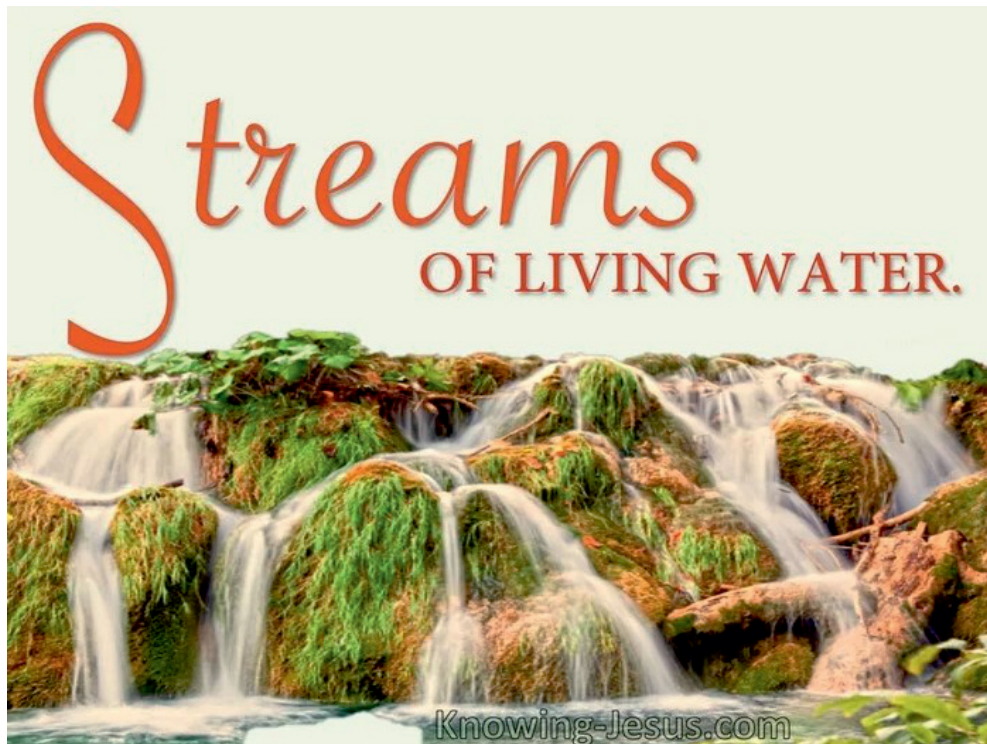
*“Let the living waters flow over my soul,  
Let your holy spirit come and take control  
Of every situation that has troubled my mind  
All my cares and burdens on to you I roll.*

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,  
Father, Father, Father,  
Spirit, Spirit, Spirit!”*

We are rest assured that the Triune God is 'Omniscient', 'Omnipotent', 'Omnipresent', 'Adonai God', 'El-Shaddai God', 'Elohim God', 'Jehovah Jireh God', 'Jehovah Nissi God', 'Jehovah Mekadesh God', and 'Jehovah Rapha God', who will guard, save and restore to us all things that we have lost in the past one-a-half years due to COVID-19 as the Lord God restored to Abraham, Job, Joseph, David and a number of legendary people in the Bible. I will proceed steadfastly with this assurance and prayer and will never cease from glorifying our Lord God for all situations.



*Mr P Samuel Albert is a trumpeter and a choir member at Church of St John the Baptist,  
Secunderabad.*





## Heat Wave

**Mrs Nargis Abraham**

Forty-two degrees Celsius. Hyderabad mid-May? No, it's June in Vancouver, Canada. Over 700 deaths in 5 days here, due to the extreme heat. I search for the coolest room in the house and look forward to attending a church service in real life. For 16 months, in-person gatherings were banned. A few churches opposed the ban and faced heavy fines. From July, restrictions have been eased.

We are in church on time, and wave happily to friends we haven't seen for a long time. Far fewer are in the pews than the 50 people allowed. Are people still afraid of getting the COVID virus? Or have they gotten used to watching the Sunday service online?

The service proceeds. It is also live streamed for those watching from home. This is the norm now. Technology came to the rescue and changed the world. We listen and pray, masks on. The sanctuary gets warm – no air-conditioning, no windows, and no fans. I recall with longing the fans at St John's going full speed, the wide-open windows wafting in cool breezes. Thanks to a dear friend who sends me the link for St John's Sunday services, I have watched nostalgically the cool interior of my Secunderabad church, as the cross-bearer stands ready at the main entrance. Everyone is properly masked and socially distanced. (I recognise some familiar faces!) Every other pew is cordoned. Just like here. We are all one under our Lord, following His guidance to keep the laws of the land (Mark 12:17).

Back here in our Vancouver church, we too sit socially distanced, wearing our masks. Outside, it is thirty degrees Celsius. Much better than forty-plus degrees. Flowers are blooming, a gentle wind wafts up. I praise the Lord for His grace. He takes care of us in all circumstances. As the sign in our sanctuary says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).”



*Mrs Nargis Abraham and her husband, Jaya attended Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad for nineteen years before they left for Canada. St John's was an integral part of their lives. They continue to be members of the church and attend when they are in Hyderabad. Nargis taught Journalism at Osmania University and Communication Skills at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Nargis and Jaya now live in Vancouver, Canada.*



## A Life Dedicated to Service - A Tribute to Dr Robins Theodore



### **Mrs Mary Radha**

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

Neither in great hospitals, nor in big cities, but a story from the villages where Dr Robins dedicated his entire life not only treating but also rehabilitating leprosy patients.

It was during his internship, when he treated a small child who was seriously ill. He and his colleague sat through the whole night trying ever so many remedies, but the child did not recover and two days later died. It was the first death of a patient under his care, and he was devastated and wept. That is when he turned to the Lord. A doctor can only do so much, but life and death are in God’s hands. This made him to turn to the Scriptures and to God for help in the treatment of each one of his patients. His favourite words are from the hymn “Let all mortal flesh keep silence and in fear trembling stand”.

He was instrumental in the construction of 151 houses for tsunami affected fishermen in Cuddalore district, where he was appreciated by the then Governor of Tamil Nadu, Mr Surjeeth Singh Barnala for his efforts. He also shared the dais with former US President Jimmy Carter in Villupuram district, during his association with the Carter Foundation. In addition, he facilitated the construction of 100 houses for leprosy patients in Vadathorasalur, Tamil Nadu.

He loved to spend time with children recounting his experiences in medicine. He spared no effort to make their stay welcome and enjoyable. A room in our house was allotted to be filled with all the summer fruits, like different varieties of mangoes, ice apples, coconuts, bananas.

He would make the evening prayer time interesting by explaining the meaning of the different passages from the Bible. Delving deep into their historical background and various interpretations of the word.

Dr Robins Theodore was also a brilliant sports person. His achievements as a captain of the University team in cricket won him many laurels. He was a fine batsman and badminton player too.



Above all, he had a healing touch.

Just a month before his passing, he was treating an 85-year-old lady whom the other doctors had given up on and healed her completely, without surgery and just medication. He was a voracious reader and could speak eloquently on any subject and was very knowledgeable. We loved to listen to his discussions and arguments, especially regarding Biblical understanding.

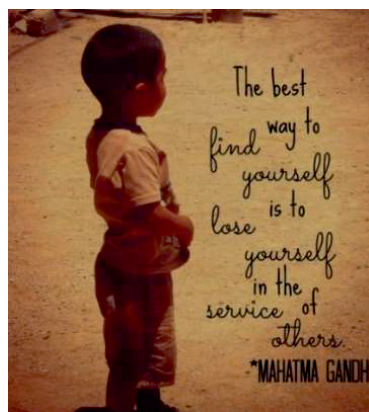
By his untimely demise we lost a wonderful person who was loving, caring and always full of fun and laughter. Everything this man was and what he meant to us cannot be put in words. His son-in-law Mr Rajesh was throughout with Dr Robins when he was in the hospital. This shows he was an adorable person.

Today we celebrate the life of Dr Robins Theodore who has touched and healed the lives of many. We praise and thank God for the good life he has led.

*Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
Safe into the haven guide;  
Oh, receive my soul at last.*



*Mrs Radha Robins is wife of Late Dr Robins Theodore. She travelled with Dr Robins since the time of their marriage and they were transferred to 15 places throughout their career. She assisted Dr Robins in all his mission work to treat leprosy-affected people and he encouraged her to be a part of his mission work. Subsequently, she joined as an occupational therapist in a leprosy hospital and was later promoted to being a social worker. She has rehabilitated many leprosy patients. Their daughter Mrs Sharon Varsha was part of their journey throughout. Dr Robins and Radha worked together from 1977 to 2010 after which they moved to their hometown, Hyderabad. She continues to work as a consultant for TLM Ireland.*







## Corona Woes

**Mrs Sheila J Kurian**

At first, we thought, it would be fun!  
Who dreamt we'd be on the run?  
This COVID has us in a spin,  
And weary with the long 'lock in'!  
Waking up in the morning with a jerk,  
Thinking of work and more work.  
Sweeping, swabbing, cooking, cleaning,  
The chores go on, never ceasing.



On my bed I think and lie,  
Of newspapers and coffee with a sigh!  
All that I must forego,  
To get on with the daily chore.  
Time for WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter?  
No! There's barely time to clear the litter!



A flip side to this tale of woe?  
We are fitter now, this we know!  
Though every bone is creaking so,  
Our skills and strength tenfold grow!  
And, so with folded hands we pray,  
Thanking God for each healthy day.



*Mrs Sheila J Kurian was the Senior Vice President (Marketing) for M/s Orient Blackswan (Publishers), where she worked for 34 years. She previously held the post of Senior Editor in the same company. Sheila is also a passionate teacher and a professional and committed teacher trainer.*





## A Quick Quiz

**Mrs Anna George**

*GIVE ME ...*

Who in the Bible asked for each of these things? Please mention the exact source.

1. An understanding heart
2. My wife, for my days are fulfilled
3. A little water to drink
4. Children, or else I die
5. John the Baptist's head
6. The portion of goods that falls to me
7. Wisdom and knowledge
8. This water that I may not thirst
9. Evermore give us this bread
10. This power, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit

**Hurry!**

🏆 Here's your chance to win a prize. 🏆

**Send in your answers for this quiz to us. \*\***

Prizes will be awarded to the first **three** correct entries!

**\*\*Answers to be sent to [parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org](mailto:parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org)**

**\*\*Correct answers will be published in the next issue of the Parish Messenger**



*Mrs Anna Alexander is a passionate teacher and mentor to children. She was the Sunday School Superintendent for several years. Presently, Anna is a Cross Bearer, Choir member and an ardent Quiz master. Interestingly, she is also an enthusiastic marathon runner.*





## Report-Sunday School

(May- June 2021)

**Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar**

*"All your sons will be taught by the Lord, and great will be your children's peace" Isaiah 54: 13*

Greetings in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

After a vacation of two months, with the grace of God, we were able to conduct the VBS 2021 successfully, from May 17-22 for six days and the Valedictory Programme on 23 May. Dr Maneesha Mohanty was the VBS Director for VBS 2021 for St John's Church, Secunderabad. I thank Dr Maneesha Mohanty for conducting the VBS 2021 virtually, very efficiently. All glory to God

This year we followed the VBS syllabus prepared by the CSI Medak Diocese Christian Education department. And the theme selected for 2021 was "FAITH" from 2 Corinthians 5:7 "For we walk by faith not by sight."

The Sunday school reopened on 13 June 2021. Children of all age groups joined virtually on ZOOM at 11.00 a.m. The programme was initiated with a prayer by our Pastor, Rev K James Cecil Victor. Ms Nikhitha Sherlyn led the children in singing and action songs. The respective class teachers were then introduced to the children.

Our Pastor Rev K James Cecil Victor took the devotion for the children, explaining the importance of attending Sunday school, protecting the environment and how children can learn significant qualities from insignificant creatures by taking ants as an example.

Mrs Sweety Raj Kumar showed the children an activity on how to make photo frames with simple items available at home. The programme was concluded with a prayer and benediction by our Pastor.

From 20 June 2021 onwards, regular Sunday school classes started, following different timings to enable the children of all age groups to attend the classes. I thank our Pastor and Pastorama for their encouragement and prayer support.

My sincere thanks to our Sunday school teachers for their dedication towards God's work in leading the children to Christ. I thank Ms Jennifer for making beautiful posters for the inaugural day and Mrs Rama Varghese and Mr Joash Sherwin for the technical support. All glory to God.



*Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar is a Chemistry lecturer at Nrupatunva Jr. College. She has been involved in children's ministry since 1993 and is deeply committed to leading the children to Christ. She is currently the Sunday School Superintendent.*







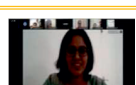


## Report-VBS 2021

**Dr Maneesha Esther Mohanty**

I am writing this report with a grateful heart for all the mercies that God has bestowed upon VBS 2021. He was leading and guiding us all through the VBS. It was indeed a challenge for the entire team to hold a virtual VBS and it is only through God's grace that we could complete the entire programme successfully.

VBS 2021 at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad was conducted from 17-22 May 2021. The theme for this year was 'FAITH'. The themes for each day were as follows:

VBS 2021 theme – FAITH				
Day	Devotion Themes and Speakers		Class themes	Guest Speakers
1	Faith	Rev James Cecil	Faith pleases God	
2	Faith over fear	Rev Bollam Moses	Faith develops perseverance	
3	Faith moves mountains	Mrs Shanthi Michael	Faith needs action	
4	Faith: Walk with God	Dr Samson Gandhi	Faith leads to miracles	
5	Faith: Key to please God	Dr Sravanthi	Faith brings victory and joy	
6	Faith: Tests and trials	Dr Grace Didla	Faith leads to salvation	



The total number of students registered this year for VBS were 178. Based on their ages, the children were divided into 5 classes – Beginner, Primary, Junior, Inter and Senior classes and each class had two teachers. The list of teachers was as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Teachers</b>
Beginner	Ms Anthea Nidhi Clement; Ms SV Sweety
Primary	Ms Indla Lucy; Ms Candita Hephzibah
Junior	Ms Julie Rhoda; Ms Maria Harshitha; Ms Geetha Salomi
Inter	Ms Mary Sujatha Madhukar; Ms K Angelina Clement
Senior	Ms Usha Rani; Ms Mary Manjula Suhasini

A typical day at VBS started with a prayer time for the teachers and volunteers at 8:45 am. The children joined in at 9 am. Each day, the Morning Prayer was led by the guest for the day. Mrs Sabitha, town DCC Sunday school secretary, Mrs Sandhya, Sunday school secretary St Georges Church, Abids, our Pastorama Mrs Suhasini Cecil and our Church members Mrs Prema Christian, Mrs Elizabeth Vivekanand and Mrs Yashodhra Desappa interceded for us. Praise and worship time was from 9:05 –9:25 a.m., where the children learnt several songs, in line with the VBS 2021 theme for the year. This was followed by a time for general devotion from 9:30 – 9:45 am. After this, the children joined the breakout rooms for their respective classes. The class time was from 9:50 –10:30 am. The children returned to the main session for praise and worship from 10:30–10:40 am. Activity time was from 10:40–10:55 am. During this time, the children did different activities such as art, craft, quizzes and puppet shows and the seniors would meet for a time of prayer. Each VBS day was wrapped up at 11 am with a closing prayer.

Various competitions were conducted and the children participated enthusiastically in fancy dress, singing, drawing, slogan-writing, paragraph-writing and memory verse competitions. The judges for the competitions were Mr James Samuel, Mrs Suhasini Cecil, Mrs Hannah David, Mrs Anna Alexander, Mrs Yashoda Rao, Mrs Mercy Sam Roy, Mr Benjamin Franklin, Mrs Suma Bunyan, Mrs Sushma and Mrs Soundarya. A few of the competitions were judged by the teachers. The winners of all the competitions were given digital certificates and prizes.

I express my gratitude to our Pastor, Rev James Cecil and Pastorama Mrs Suhasini Cecil for their outstanding leadership, constant encouragement and continuous guidance. I thank the members of the pastorate committee for their constant support and prayers. I earnestly thank all the guests of the day for their prayers, the devotion speakers for inspiring and motivating our children and the judges of the different competitions for encouraging the participants. I extend my thanks to Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar, Sunday school superintendent for her guidance and suggestions. I thank all the teachers of VBS-2021 for their dedication and tireless efforts. Special thanks to the entire praise and worship team, especially Ms Neria and Ms Nikitha who were present with us virtually, every day. I extend my sincere thanks to the technical team, Mr Joash Sherwin for managing the Zoom meetings efficiently and Ms Jennifer Hadassah for



beautifully designing the daily theme posters, competition posters and the digital certificates. I extend sincere thanks to Ms Nidhi Clement, Ms Sheeba Roy, Mrs Rama Varghese for their help. I thank Dr Udaia Kumar and family for generously sponsoring the prizes for the winners of different competitions. With a deep sense of gratitude, I would like to thank all the parents who encouraged their children and ensured that they registered for VBS 2021.

And the biggest thanks to our dear children for making VBS-2021 lively, interesting and vibrant. Last but certainly not the least, I would like to thank each and every member of our Church who prayed for VBS-2021. God bless us all.



## Artwork by the VBS Children on the Theme FAITH

### BEGINNER



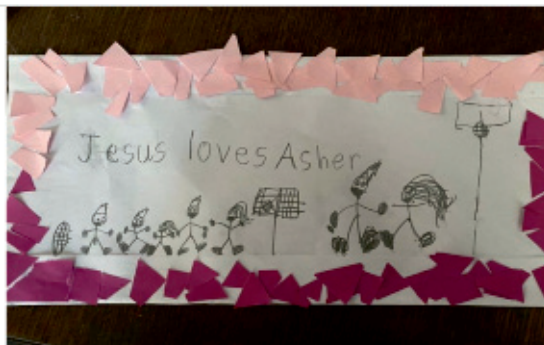
Jenica Arlene



### PRIMARY



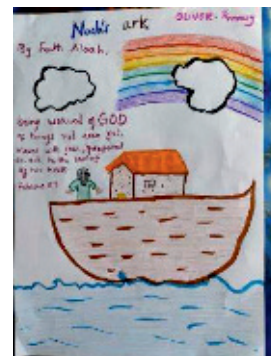
Asher George



James Kafira



Shishir Nathan



Artwork by the VBS Children on the Theme FAITH

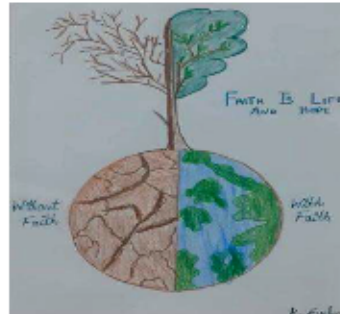
JUNIOR



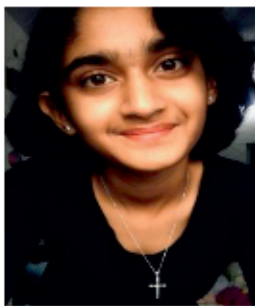
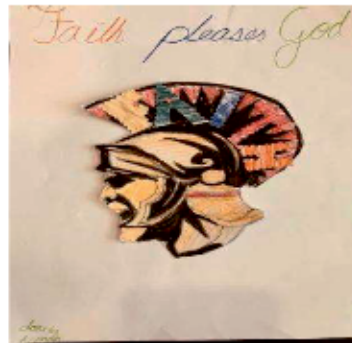
Lam Ruchitha Angel



Evelyn Natalia



Keenan George



Carolyn Paul





**SENIOR**



**Rahul Nathaniel Kenneth**



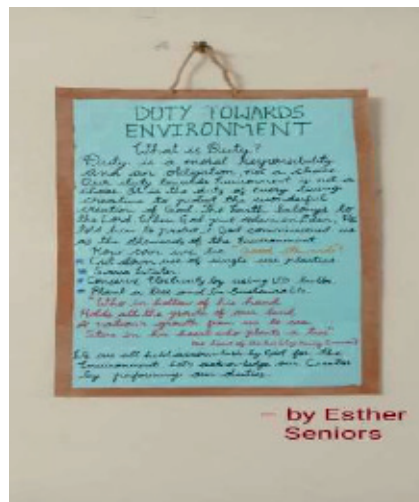
**Anna Manucla**



**Nissie Diana**

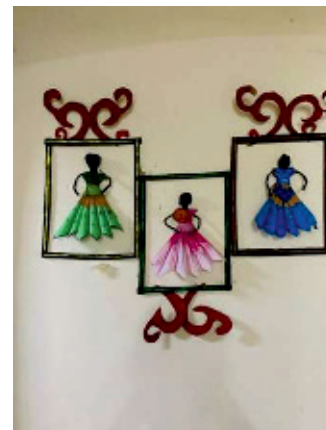
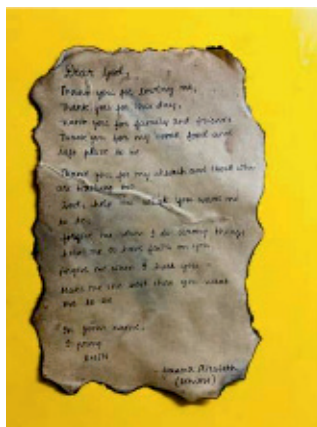
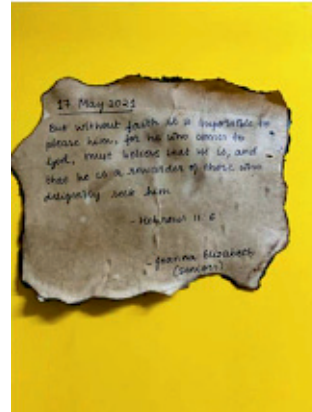
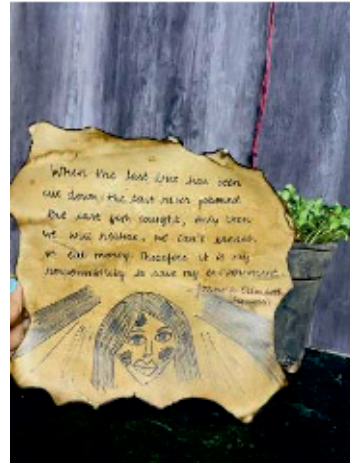


**Esther Vincela**





**Joanna Elizabeth**



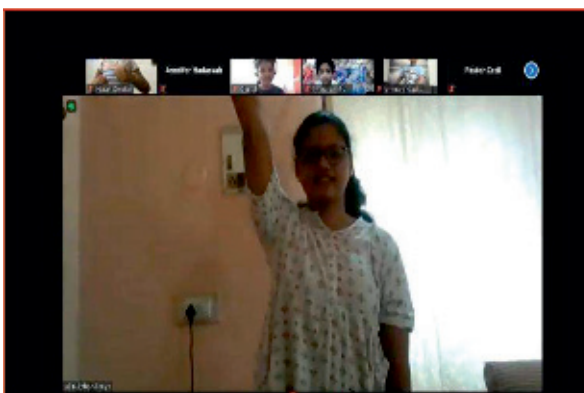
## Glimpses of VBS 2021

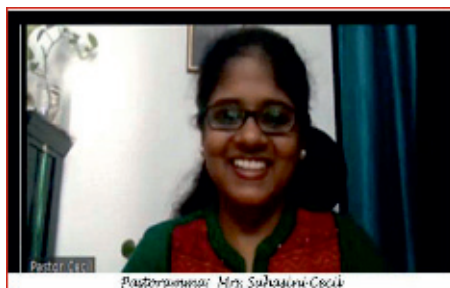
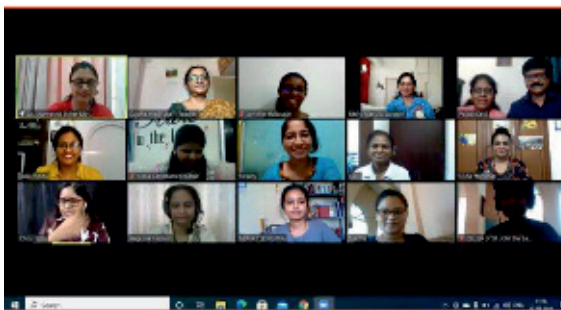
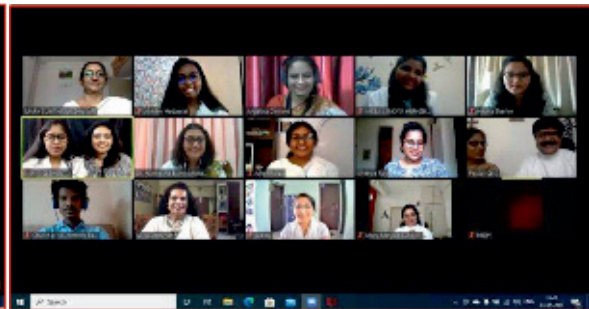
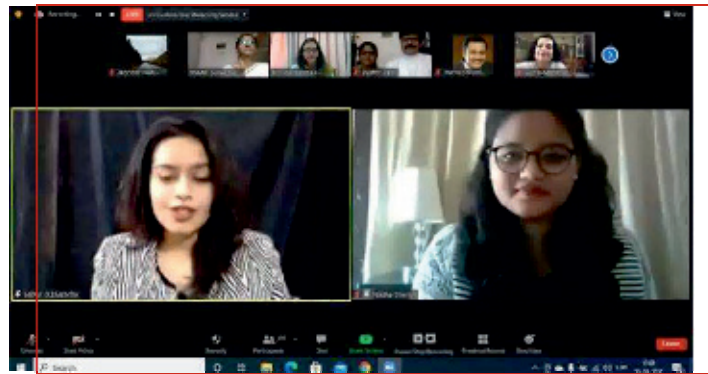


Presbyter Incharge: Rev Cecil James



VBS Director: Dr. Maneesha Mohanty





Pastor/Minister Mrs. Sukasini Cecuk



Sunday School Superintendent Mrs. Mary Sujatha Madhukar





## Report - Men's Fellowship

(April – June 2021)

**Mr P Francis Augustine**

The Men's Fellowship of our church resumed its meetings in virtual mode immediately after the Lent break. I took over as convener of the Fellowship from my predecessor Dr Joel Bunyan, who placed the Fellowship on sound footing with missionary zeal under the guidance of our dear Pastor Rev K J Cecil Victor. The Pastor continues to play a pivotal role in the Fellowship.

During the period under report, the second wave of COVID-19 was at its peak and all the activities of our church were greatly impacted by the same and the Men's Fellowship was no exception. The Zoom app was a powerful window that the Lord provided to facilitate meetings and conferences during the trying and troubled times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this was a time when the Fellowship could've done something beautiful for God by providing some real help to the affected, it could not do anything in the absence of any resources and the task was also daunting, fraught with grave risks and many practical difficulties. Some of the fellowship members, however, did respond to the need in their own humble and individual ways. It is a matter of deep regret that the fellowship collectively could not do anything. We need to ponder over and reflect on this so that the fellowship is in a better position to do something tangible next time.

### **Fellowship Meetings**

The Men's Fellowship met virtually through the Zoom app every Tuesday from 7 pm onwards for about 75–90 minutes. In every meeting, we enjoyed praising and worshipping the Lord with hymns, scripture reading, devotions, listening to the message of God, intercessory prayers and towards the end participating in the Bible quiz. Each meeting always concluded with a closing prayer and benediction by our Pastor.

All the messages were delivered by learned men of God with rich pastoral experience and sometimes by our own senior members in the fellowship with proven accomplishments. All the messages were marked by their clarity, brevity and providing of deep insights into the Scriptures leading the members to self-examination and introspection. The messages were heard with great interest and attention. Nearly half the messages were delivered by our dear Pastor Rev K J Cecil Victor and the rest by Rt Rev P Surya Prakash (Emeritus Bishop, CSI Karimnagar), Dr Samson Gandhi, Dr M Anthony David, and Bro Jason Wilson. Rev Gabriel (CSI, Mangalore), and Rev Silvan C Kumar (CSI, Bangalore) also shared the word of God. On one occasion we also heard a recorded sermon of Rt Rev Daniel Thyagaraja, Bishop of Jaffna Diocese, CSI (Sri Lanka) of who spoke about the first calling of the disciples (Philip and Nathaniel) by Jesus Christ. All the members were greatly benefited by these sermons. The threshold level of the scriptural knowledge of all our Fellowship members is quite high.



## **Bible Quiz**

Towards the end of each meeting, all the participants were divided into 3–4 groups of 4 each for the purpose of conducting the Bible quiz for about 20 minutes. About 24 questions were set from 4 or 5 chapters of the Gospel (mostly involving simple direct answers) and the quizmaster asked these questions, one at a time, to each team by rotation. The last few questions were open to all teams simultaneously, and whichever team answered first, got the credits. All the members came prepared for the quiz, which made it quite competitive and interesting. We have so far completed the Gospel of St Matthew and the Gospel of St Mark is about to be completed. The main purpose of the quiz is to make all the members read the Scriptures and thereby refresh their knowledge, remember and follow the word of God, thus coming closer to Him, and bear fruit for Him.

## **Miscellaneous Activities**

Some members of our fellowship play active roles in the smooth conduct of church services (including online) and help the pastor in the organisational matters of the church. The WhatsApp group of our Fellowship is always active and effective mode of communication with several members posting material on a daily basis —melodious Christian hymns, daily meditations/devotions, scripture lessons, historical facts about scriptures and Saints, news of relevance to all Christians, interesting anecdotes, Covid-19 related developments, and several others.

## **Future Outlook**

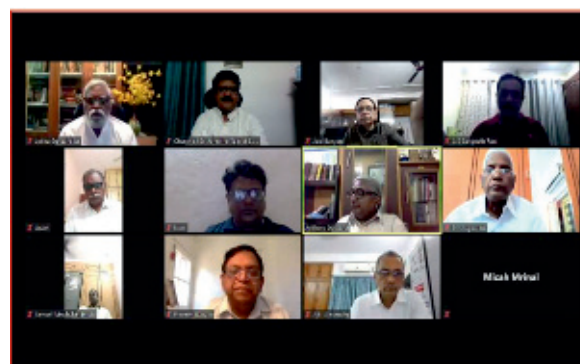
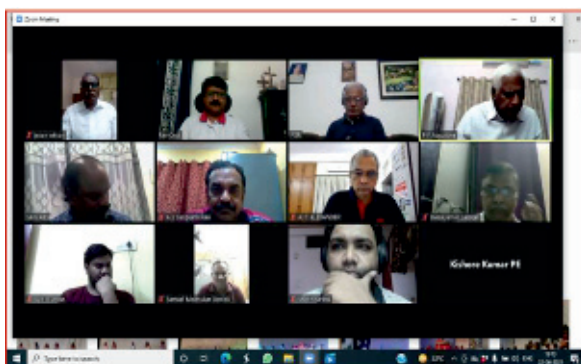
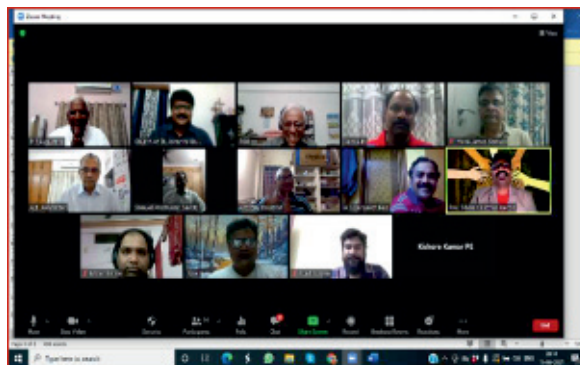
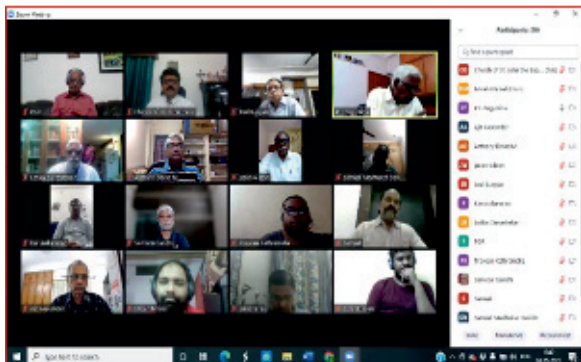
The attendance in our meetings is around 15 –20, which is disproportionately small, considering the membership of our church. We request other men from our church, particularly all married persons to join and strengthen the fellowship by their active participation and stay blessed and fruitful. This will enable them to give a better account of themselves with regard to the God-given responsibilities they are entrusted with. Let us remember what St Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9–10 “*We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*”

It is our fervent hope that SJC Men's Fellowship will steadily grow from strength to strength in the years ahead and become a vibrant instrument for the glory of God. Let us all strive towards this goal.



*Mr P Francis Augustine is a Geologist who worked in the Geological Survey of India, Government of India for 36 years and retired as Deputy Director General. He has been a member of Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad for over 25 years.*







## Report -Women's Fellowship

(April – June 2021)

**Mrs Angelina Clement**

I bring warm greetings in the matchless name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I hereby present our report from mid-March till date.

### **Seven Words from the Cross**

We mediated on the seven last words from the Cross that proved a window into Jesus' soul, a way to understand through His own last words what is ultimately important to our Saviour who died on the Cross for us. Daily devotions based on the Gospel of John were posted every morning in our WhatsApp group. We prayerfully prepared our hearts for Holy Week and Good Friday.

During the Holy Week we all had a reflective, blessed, and special personal time, journeying with Christ towards the cross. Inspiring and enlightening messages were shared by the members of our Fellowship during the Lenten season. On Holy Saturday, we meditated on Jesus' passion, death and on His descent into hell and awaited our Lord's Resurrection.

At the tomb when Jesus called Mary by her name, she found a greater lifting of the spirit. Even today Jesus calls each one of us by our name, assuring us that He lives and is with us always. He bids us to go and tell others the good news!

### **Lives of Prophets Elijah, Jeremiah and Daniel**

In the month of April and May, the daily morning devotions were based on Prophets Elijah, Jeremiah and Daniel.

*Prophet Elijah* – the prophet's relationship with God is one of the great stories in the Bible. His true intimacy with God came in whispers, not shouts. That is true for us today as well. Finding those quiet intimate moments in the midst of our hectic routines may seem impossible. Let us not forget to spend precious time alone listening to the still, small voice of God.

*Prophet Jeremiah* – He stood faithfully with God to the end of his days, even in the face of much opposition and physical persecution. We learn many lessons from his faith – to serve God faithfully to the end of our days and glorify the one whose name we bear.

*Prophet Daniel* – Though taken to Babylon as a captive, Daniel rose through the political ranks because of his unassailable character. He never wavered in his commitment to God and to doing the right thing. Through the devotionals we can learn the truth that Daniel lived by, which was neither our pleasures nor our problems last forever. Instead, let us concentrate on what counts and invest in what is truly eternal.

We also initiated chain prayers, to specifically pray for the healing of those affected by COVID -19. Sometimes life seems hard to bear, full of sorrow, trouble and woe, it is then we have to remember that it is in these troubled and agonising times that we grow and come closer to God and experience His unconditional love, comfort and solace.





As we are committed to keeping prayer and the Word of God as the anchor in the Women's Fellowship ministry, we encouraged our members to pray, and continuous prayers were offered from 5:30 in the morning to late in the evening. Theoretically, praying together amplifies the power of prayer. This is vital, because there is strength in numbers.

We celebrated Mother's Day on May 9, 2021 and paid tributes of love, reverence and expressed our gratitude to the one who gave us life and to whose sacrificial love we owe our place in the world.

Virtual Fellowship meetings are held every Thursday and during the lockdown, we also organise fasting fellowship meetings on Friday at 6:30 pm. We continue our mission of Christian fellowship and spiritual growth for the women of our church and encourage our members to spread the Gospel and to exhibit their skills and talents to glorify His Precious Name.

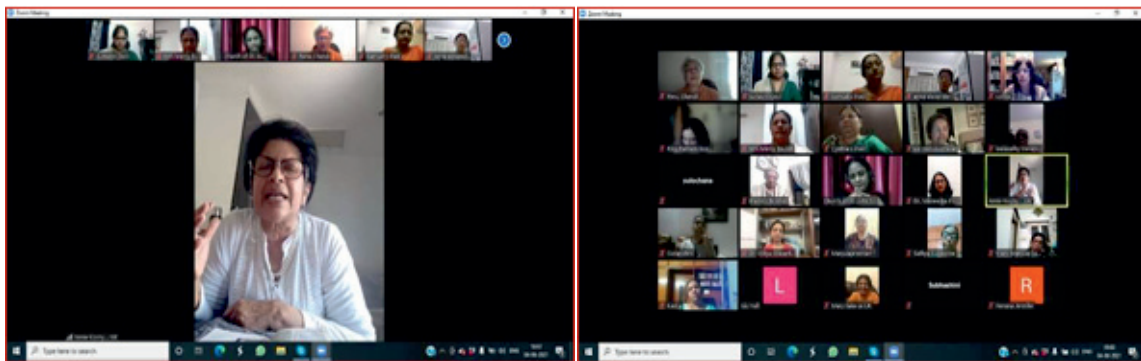
Our Fellowship meetings include Praise and Worship Sessions, Scripture Reading where the Word of God is shared by one of the members. We also invited speakers to share God's message on special occasions. We spend time in intercessory prayers, sharing testimonies and learn the scriptures in depth through games and quizzes.

From the month of June, heart touching devotionals are being posted every morning that encourage the members to read a given chapter, reflect, introspect and pray.

We firmly believe that the way to keep our hearts undisturbed and filled with the peace of God, despite the troubles in the world, is by believing in God, even when everything seems to go wrong and to put our faith in God who is greater. He will see us through. In particular, we are to believe the promises given in the Bible. It is through prayer and meditation on the promises of Christ, that we keep our hearts in perfect peace.



*Mrs Angelina Clement is a teacher at St. Andrews, and Secretary, Women's Fellowship at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*





## Report-Sunday School

(May- June 2021)

**Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar**

*"All your sons will be taught by the Lord, and great will be your children's peace" Isaiah 54: 13*

Greetings in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

After a vacation of two months, with the grace of God, we were able to conduct the VBS 2021 successfully, from May 17-22 for six days and the Valedictory Programme on 23 May. Dr Maneesha Mohanty was the VBS Director for VBS 2021 for St John's Church, Secunderabad. I thank Dr Maneesha Mohanty for conducting the VBS 2021 virtually, very efficiently. All glory to God

This year we followed the VBS syllabus prepared by the CSI Medak Diocese Christian Education department. And the theme selected for 2021 was "FAITH" from 2 Corinthians 5:7 "For we walk by faith not by sight."

The Sunday school reopened on 13 June 2021. Children of all age groups joined virtually on ZOOM at 11.00 a.m. The programme was initiated with a prayer by our Pastor, Rev K James Cecil Victor. Ms Nikhitha Sherlyn led the children in singing and action songs. The respective class teachers were then introduced to the children.

Our Pastor Rev K James Cecil Victor took the devotion for the children, explaining the importance of attending Sunday school, protecting the environment and how children can learn significant qualities from insignificant creatures by taking ants as an example.

Mrs Sweety Raj Kumar showed the children an activity on how to make photo frames with simple items available at home. The programme was concluded with a prayer and benediction by our Pastor.

From 20 June 2021 onwards, regular Sunday school classes started, following different timings to enable the children of all age groups to attend the classes. I thank our Pastor and Pastorama for their encouragement and prayer support.

My sincere thanks to our Sunday school teachers for their dedication towards God's work in leading the children to Christ. I thank Ms Jennifer for making beautiful posters for the inaugural day and Mrs Rama Varghese and Mr Joash Sherwin for the technical support. All glory to God.



*Mrs Mary Sujatha Madhukar is a Chemistry lecturer at Nrupatunva Jr. College. She has been involved in children's ministry since 1993 and is deeply committed to leading the children to Christ. She is currently the Sunday School Superintendent.*





## Testimonies

### God is my Refuge and Strength

**Mrs Aruna Clarence Ezekiel**

My name is Aruna Clarence Ezekiel. I was born to Clarence and Hema Bai and raised in a family of seven sisters and one brother. I attribute my values and my moral compass to my parents and their Christian values. In retrospect I see God's hand through our lives with my parents and my paternal grandparents, who lived with us till they passed away due to old age. We always felt blessed with a good home and a good education. Our family was one of two Christian families in a large neighbourhood, and I know my parents were revered by all. Our home was a home of prayer, singing and laughter. We lived close to the Centenary Methodist Church, and on Sunday's we had a host of our church friends around our dining table.

I was in my late teens when we experienced the loss of our parents a year apart. That's when I felt my foundation shaken. My family learned to be self-sufficient, and very soon I was employed. I was married soon after. My husband Sushil Ezekiel, and I did experience some challenges, but got through them. We managed to retain humour in our lives, and had two beautiful children, Rohini and Sandeep.

People may think I am biased, when I say that my daughter was the kindest, most beautiful person both inside and out. To me she was incomparable. My son was kind, generous, and someone I loved more than life itself. My life after 2005, when I lost my son in an accident has been tumultuous.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008, and if it was not for my daughter, my husband and my siblings, I would not have gotten through it. The tragedies in my life did not end. I lost my daughter in 2009. I knew that my too husband was living on borrowed time, God's pure grace and his own determination kept him alive, because he knew he had to be there with me, but God wanted him more.

My husband was taken from me a year later. God realised that I had grown stronger, I had been cured of cancer. I had my siblings, my church, some friends and mainly God on my side. With God's help I live every day with joy in my heart and a song on my lips.

I have so much to be grateful for because God is my refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. Therefore, I will not fear, though the earth be removed, though the mountain be carried into the midst of the sea. Psalm 46: 1-2.



*Mrs Aruna Ezekiel is a branch Manager at State Bank of India and is a member at Church of St John the Baptist, Secunderabad.*





## Doing the Impossible with God

**Ms Hasmitha John Madhavaram**

May all praise, glory, and honour belong to Jesus Christ. God, in His grace, has done astonishing things in my life. God's faithfulness and promises have led me to be where I am today. I am an Internal medicine resident doctor in the top hospitals of the Atlantic Health System, New Jersey, USA. This is the work of God.

Let me tell you why my story is interesting. To begin with, what I achieved and what I am today is nowhere near to what I have planned. My plan was to be close to my parents, so I was working towards pursuing my career in India. I didn't choose the US path. Pursuing medicine in the USA is an enormous challenge, which includes taking the USMLE exams. USMLE exams are series of US medical licensing exams with each exam lasting 8-9 hrs, extremely expensive, considered the most difficult and gruelling exams globally. Doctors compete worldwide to secure a post-graduation seat in very limited visa-sponsoring US hospitals. I didn't want any of that because it takes a long time and is too risky. But God's plans are different from ours. "My thoughts," says the Lord, "are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours" (Isaiah 55:8-9). God, in His own way, has redirected my career path.

A career in the US, which I didn't even choose in the beginning, was the very path God made me pursue. It was by no means an easy one, but he gave me strength and has been my constant comforter through my journey. I prayed persistently. And God gave me an amazing opportunity to shadow in a top hospital in the USA, Mayo Clinic. God has been part of every detail of my application, interviews, visa, and the whole process of selection. I have put an incredible amount of faith in HIS word, and according to His promises, He gave me success. I am blessed with a loving family, including my grandparents, who have played an enormous role in my life.

All I can say is God is good, and His grace is powerful. For God speaks, "You will succeed, not by military might or by your strength, but by my spirit. Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you." (Zechariah 4:6-7). I am a living testimony of God's faithfulness. All praise to Jesus



*Ms Hasmitha John Madhavaram is an Internal medicine resident doctor in the top hospitals of the Atlantic Health System, New Jersey, USA. She is a beloved child of the most high God.*



## My Miracle for Life

### Mrs Prema Christian



Halleluiah Praise the Lord...With a grateful heart I wish to praise and thank my living and loving Lord Jesus for the miracle He bestowed on me by healing me of COVID-19 at the age of 82. As soon as I knew that the test result was 'positive' I just prayed with my folded hands "Lord Thy will be done".

I wish to thank my friends from our church, cousins, friends, who made me feel loved, and who brought us, (my son, Chandran and me) breakfast, food, fruits every day and left it with our watchman, who in turn delivered it at my door for 25 days. With the love and prayers of all the dear ones and my international prayer group 'SPARK' I experienced a miracle for life. **My Jesus did it.**



*Mrs Prema Christian travelled to different places in India along with her husband Clarence, who was in the India Railways. Over the years, Prema worked in different missions in various capacities, such as PRO Leprosy Mission Trust India, New Delhi. Principal, Women's Industrial school, Vellore. Prema is a soprano singer and has been enthusiastic member of the St John's choir.*

## He is my Shield

### Mrs Margaret Matthew Eeda



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. During the COVID-19 outbreak last year 2020, I was down with a cold and cough for more than a week and the doctors advised me to get the COVID test done. I was in constant fear and was praying earnestly, because the situation around us was not favourable. Our Lord has delivered me and kept me away from the deadly virus. Recently, during the second wave, one of our friends visited us who was later tested positive. My family and I were tensed and worried; various thoughts were coming to my mind; what will happen? How will we manage? What should we do?

We kept praying, continuously during the whole isolation period. It was just then God's word came to my mind, "Do not fear, Almighty God of hosts will surely be with you; He has your back and He is your shield." God protected us and kept us safe.

God's word enabled me to understand that God is with us and I should not be afraid. We shall always be practicing in our spirits to come closer to God. I saw that my constant fear and worrying, were thoughts put into my head by Satan, which showed that I lack true faith in God. Our lives are held in God's hands. Having experienced this pandemic situation, I have truly come to feel that God is by my side. When I felt anxious and scared, it was God's word that gave me faith and strength and enabled me to stand firm.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10). I witnessed His wondrous deed and my faith in God increased. God's promises preserve my Life.

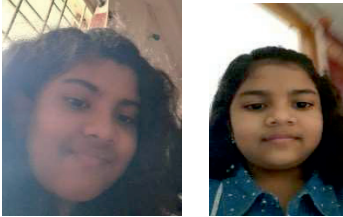


*Mrs Margaret Matthew Eeda is a homemaker, an enthusiastic member of the St John's choir and actively volunteers in the Sunday School activities.*



## Sunday School Corner

**Crossword Puzzle** by **Swetcha Prayoktha** and **B Shourya Prashastha** from Junior and Primary.

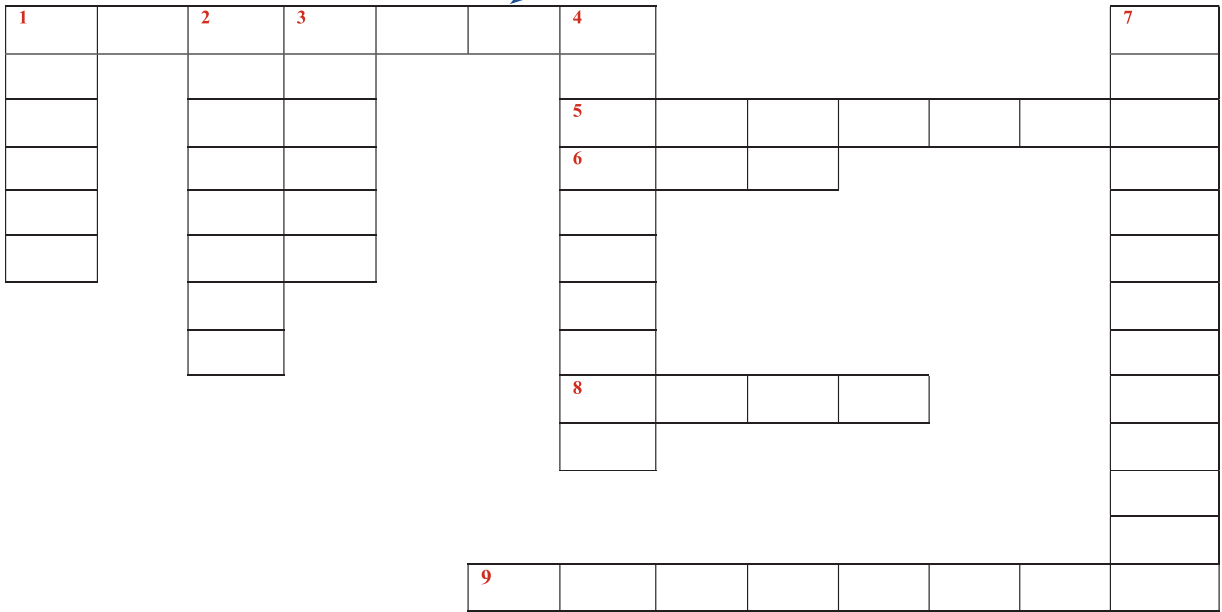


**Hurry!**

🏆 Here's your chance to win a prize. 🏆

**Send in your answers for this quiz to us. \*\*\***

Prizes will be awarded to the first **three** correct entries!



Clues Across	Clues Down
1. Who is known as the Father of Faith? <b>(7)</b>	1. Which is the first mountain mentioned in the Bible? <b>(6)</b>
5. Which is the tenth month in Hebrew calendar? <b>(6)</b>	2. Name the place where Israel and Amalek fought? <b>(8)</b>
6. On which mountain did Aaron die? <b>(3)</b>	3. What wood was used for the Tabernacle? <b>(6)</b>
8. Which is the first month in the Hebrew calendar? <b>(4)</b>	4. Name Enoch's son. <b>(10)</b>
9. Which is the middle book in the Old Testament? <b>(8)</b>	7. Which is the middle book in the New Testament? <b>(14)</b>

\*\*\*Answers to be sent to [parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org](mailto:parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org)

\*\*\*Correct answers will be published in the next issue of the Parish Messenger



## Bible Women – Word Search



**B Swetcha Prayoktha - Junior**

Read the following questions and find the answers in the grid given below.

1. Who is the mother of all living beings? (Genesis 3:20)
2. Name Lamech's two wives (Genesis 4:23)
3. Name Abraham's third wife (Genesis 25:2)
4. Name Judah's daughter – in – law (Genesis 38:11)
5. Who was Moses' mother? (Exodus 6:20)
6. Who was Aaron's wife? (Exodus 6:23)
7. Who was Caleb's daughter? (Joshua 15:16)
8. Who killed Sisera? (Judges 4 :18,21)
9. Name Elimelech wife (Ruth 1:2)
10. Name Elkanah's wives (1 Samuel 1:2)
11. Name Saul's first daughter (1 Samuel 18: 17)
12. Name David's first wife (1 Samuel 18: 27)
13. Who was Solomon's mother (2 Samuel 11:3)
14. Name the virgin who served David in his old age (1 Kings 1:3)
15. Name Ben – Abinadab's wife (1 Kings :11)
16. Who brought up Joash? (2 Kings 11:2)

**Hurry!**

👉 Here's your chance to win a prize. 👈

**Send in your answers for this quiz to us. \*\*\*\***

Prizes will be awarded to the first **three** correct

Find the answers in the grid given below.

A	B	M	I	C	H	A	L	P	T
M	C	D	E	F	G	A	Z	E	A
E	I	H	J	K	L	D	I	N	M
R	E	M	S	N	O	A	L	I	A
A	P	V	Q	A	R	H	L	N	R
B	J	A	E	L	H	S	A	N	A
T	K	E	T	U	R	A	H	A	B
H	A	N	N	A	H	U	V	H	I
E	L	I	S	H	E	B	A	W	S
N	A	O	M	I	X	Y	Z	A	H
C	B	A	T	H	S	H	E	B	A
T	A	P	H	A	T	H	F	H	G
J	O	C	H	E	B	E	D	I	K
Z	J	E	H	O	S	H	E	B	A

\*\*\*\*Answers to be sent to [parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org](mailto:parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org)

\*\*\*\**Correct answers will be published in the next issue of the Parish Messenger*

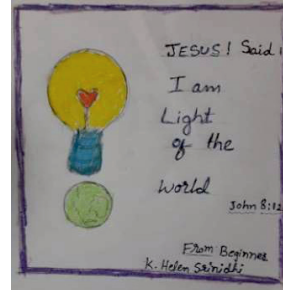


## Art Work by Sunday School Children

### Beginner



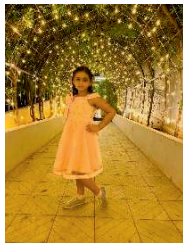
**Helen Srinidhi**



### Primary



**Shama Samu**



**Tiara**

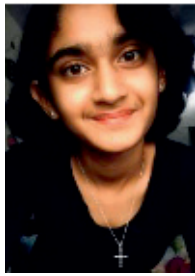


**Joshua Bennett Eeda**

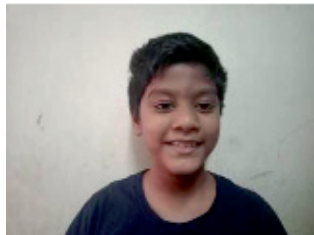




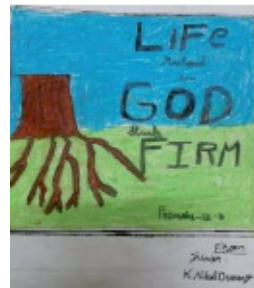
Junior



Carolyn Paul



K Nihal Devaraj




### The Cross, the World and ME...

M Carolyn Paul

THE CROSS, THE WORLD AND ME...

Dear Loving Jesus,  
 How sweet your name  
 sounds, your sacrificial  
 death forgives our sins, drowns our  
 sorrows, Heals our wounds, drives away  
 our fears, enlightens our minds.  
 My Lord, My Life, My way, My end  
 Accept the praise I bring.  
 Jesus! I try hard not to stumble in  
 my walk of faith. You know the  
 temptations & problems I face  
 till today; desires that lead me  
 away from you. Sometimes its  
 too very strong for me I need your help in this  
 battle, I cannot do it alone. I NEED YOU!!  
 I need your Holy Spirit to give me strength.  
 Your word promises that I will not be  
 tempted beyond what I can bear.  
 Lord as you said in Matthew 26:41  
 "Watch & pray so that you will not fall  
 into temptation. The spirit  
 is willing, but the flesh is weak." My flesh

the temptation doesn't catch me by  
 surprise. Help me to keep my  
 spirit well fed, with your word  
 so that I remain like You are  
 living in me! And You are greater than  
 any power of darkness & sin that is in the World.  
 Let my heart obey Your Word.  
 Let me have the faith & trust  
 that You are already working.  
 Thank You Jesus!  
 I love You Jesus!  
 Amen!



M. CAROLYN PAUL  
 STUDENT,  
 ST. ANN'S HIGH SCHOOL.







## Records - Church of St John the Baptist

April 2021 to August 2021

Marriage Record 	
Married on	Names
24/4/2021	Nitin David Natta and Ratna Sonali Putla
Marriage solemnised at Church of St John the Baptist in the august presence of Bishop A C Solomon Raj and Pastor Rev James Cecil Victor.	



 Death Records 		
Died on	Name	
18/4/2021	Mr Jaya Sundara Sekhar Didla	
25/5/2021	Dr Robins Theodore Mesa	





## Chronography of Fr Stan Swamy

**Fr Stanislaus Lourduwamy**

**Fr Stanislaus Lourduwamy**, fondly known as Swamy was born on 26 April 1937 in Trichy, [Tamil Nadu](#), India. In the 1970s, he studied theology and received a master's degree in sociology in the Philippines, where he encountered a series of protests and demonstrations against the administration. During his further studies, he made friends with Brazilian Catholic Archbishop Hélder Câmara, whose work with poor people influenced him.

Stanislaus Lourduwamy (26 April 1937 – 5 July 2021), popularly known as Stan Swamy, was an Indian Roman Catholic priest, a member of the Jesuit order, and a tribal rights activist for several decades. Swamy was the oldest person to be accused of terrorism in India.

### Activism

Fr Swamy was the director of the Jesuit-run Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, from 1975 to 1986. He had questioned the non-implementation of the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, which stipulates setting up of a Tribes Advisory Council with members solely of the Adivasi community for their protection, well-being and development in the state.

In a video circulated two days ahead of his arrest, Swamy suggested his arrest was linked to his work, as it involved dissent against government policies.

He said, what is happening to me is not something unique happening to me alone. It is a broader process that is taking place all over the country. We are all aware how prominent intellectuals, lawyers writers, poets, activists, students, leaders, they are all put into jail because they have expressed their dissent or raised questions about the ruling powers of India. We are part of the process. In a way I am happy to be part of this process. I am not a silent spectator, but part of the game, and ready to pay the price whatever be it.

While incarcerated in Taloja Central Jail, in a letter to his Jesuit colleague, Fr Swamy highlighted the plight of the prisoners stating, “Many of such poor under trials don't know what charges have been put on them, have not seen their charge sheet and just remain in prison for years without any legal or other assistance.”

Fr Swamy was implicated in the 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence, while he claimed that he was not in Pune during the said period, and he was accused of being a Maoist "sympathiser". It was alleged that the Persecuted Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PPSC) founded by him and Sudha Bharadwaj, "to fight for the release of around 3,000 men and women who have been labelled as Maoists and imprisoned", was a front for Maoist fundraising. The Jesuits denied the allegation of Swamy being a Maoist, by stating that it was against the ethos of the Jesuit order. He was arrested by the NIA on 8 October 2020, from Bagaicha, a Jesuit social action centre,[\[17\]](#) and charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, under which bail can be denied.

Fr Swamy's arrest triggered widespread protests across India. The arrests were termed as politically motivated due to his work among the Adivasi community, the release of under trials, Persecuted Prisoners Solidarity



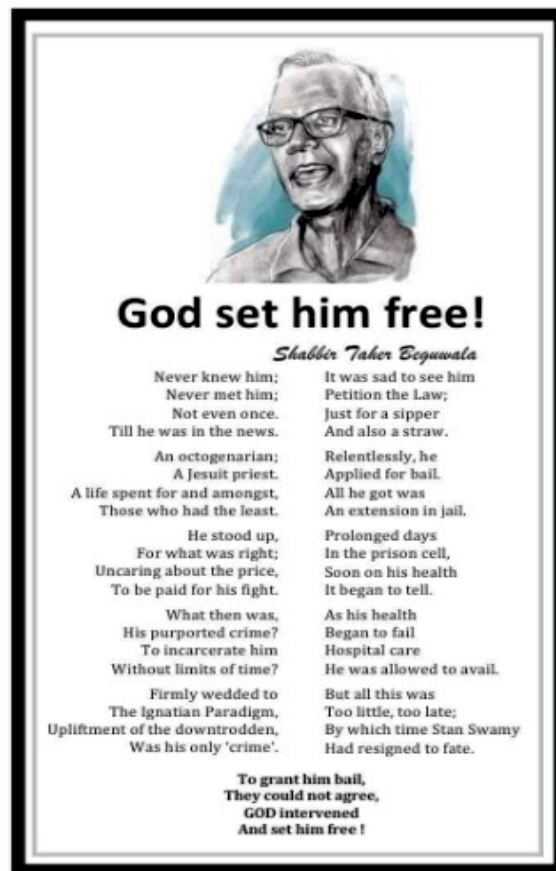
Committee, among others. Leaders of other minority religions also protested his arrest. In a protest on 21 October 2020, leaders of opposition political parties such as Shashi Tharoor, Sitaram Yechury, D. Raja, Supriya Sule and Kanimozhi along with economist Jean Dreze, Dr Joseph Marianus Kujur, the director of the Ranchi-based Xavier Institute of Social Sciences, activists Dayamani Barla and Rupali Jadhav, and lawyer Mihir Desai called for Fr Stan's release.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Shri. Hemant Sorn and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan objected to the arrest of Father Swamy. Fr Swamy suffered from Parkinson's disease and other age-related illnesses. He fell multiple times while in prison. He suffered from hearing loss in both ears and had undergone surgeries. While appearing before the Court over video conferencing on 21 May 2021, Swamy refused to be admitted to either JJ hospital or any other hospital and requested only interim bail so that he could go to his home in Ranchi, citing his rapidly deteriorating health. On 28 May 2021, the Bombay High Court directed the Maharashtra government to admit Swamy to a private hospital for 15 days, considering his rapidly deteriorating health. He was admitted to the Holy Family Hospital, Mumbai. Fr. Swamy then tested positive for COVID-19.

On 4 July 2021, Swamy was put on ventilator support, as his health deteriorated. He died on 5 July 2021, ahead of his bail hearing in Bombay High Court.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stan\\_Swamy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stan_Swamy)

### Poem on Fr Stan Swamy by *Shabbir Taher Beguwala*



## Entry Form Quiz/Puzzle Competition

(Send in your answers to [parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org](mailto:parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org) )

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ (in case of minor)

Name of quiz: \_\_\_\_\_ Page number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of submission: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

Please use the Google form from the link: <https://forms.gle/nFzsdV78gxFgFkfV6>



### Art Work on a Wooden Board



**Mrs Margaret Matthew Eeda (Sunday School Volunteer)**



Please share your feedback with the editorial team, email at: [parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org](mailto:parishmessenger@stjohnscsi.org)

